DRAMATIC GENIUS.

IN

FIVE BOOKS.

By PAUL HIFFERNAN, M. D.

Eſt quoddam prodire tenus, ſi non datur ultra.

HOR.

IMITATED.

T' have gone thus far, ſhou'd ſoothe all Critic Spleen,
And gain ſome Credit with ingenuous Minds.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.
M, DCC, LXX.

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M. DCC. LXX.

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THE FIRST BOOK

Delineates the PLAN of a permanent TEMPLE, to be erected to the Memory of SHAKESPEARE, in a Claſſical Taſte; with INSCRIPTIONS and DECORATIONS, ſuitable to the Objects choſen.

THE SECOND BOOK

Inveſtigates in a new Manner, the Progreſs of the Human Mind, in Inventing the DRAMA, and conducting it to Perfection, with a candid Diſquiſition of the Rules laid down by Critics.

THE THIRD BOOK

Exhibits a philoſophical Analyſis of the Pre-requiſites for the *Art* of *Acting*, in which will be ſhewn many eſſential Articles, omitted by thoſe who have written upon that Subject.

THE

THE FOURTH BOOK

Displays the CRITERIA of DRAMATIC GENIUS;

1° In *Compoſition*;

2° In the true ſublime and beautiful of *Acting*.

THE FIFTH BOOK

Treats of Architecture, Painting, and other Arts, ſo far as they are acceſſary to *Theatrical Repreſentation*.

TO

DAVID GARRICK, Esq;

SIR,

THE Purport of this Tract implies the Reason of its being dedicated to you. —— In treating a Subject with which your theatric Fame is so closely interwoven, I could not avoid alluding thereto, occasionally; but have done it in so cautious and circumspect a Manner, as that will doubtless induce your Friends to think too sparing; while your Enemies cannot demur against what is founded on Truth.

I must wave paying here a Compliment of your having no Enemies, because that can never be applicable, but to some unoffending Heir of Mediocrity; and HORACE is my Voucher:

Urit enim Fulgore suo qui prægravat Artes,
Infra se positas.
Who shines *superior* to *excelling* Art
Is a fix'd Object for *pale Envy's* Dart.

While

While you were meditating to entertain the Public, with, what it has ſince near an hundred Times rapturouſly applauded, a new Kind of *Spectacle*, judiciouſly magnificent, and critically rational; I thought it a fair, and inviting Opportunity, for literary Volunteers to figure in: each to contribute his Share, on ſo brilliant, ſo grateful, nay ſo patriotic a Solemnity.

Inſpired by that Sentiment, I zealouſly put together the Contents of the following Sheets; more laudable, perhaps, for the Deſign, than happy in the Finiſhing: but, ſuch as it is, be pleaſed to accept as my

Exegi Monimentum

A votive Monument, and Tribute due

To Nature, Genius, SHAKESPEARE, Art, and You.

The AUTHOR.

MAY, 1770.

THE FIRST BOOK

DELINEATES

THE PLAN OF A PERMANENT TEMPLE;

To be ERECTED to the MEMORY of

SHAKESPEARE,

In a CLASSICAL TASTE:

WITH

INSCRIPTIONS AND DECORATIONS

Suitable to the OBJECTS Chosen.

THE FIRST BOOK

OF

SHAKESPEARE,

CONTAINING

THE PLAN OF A PERMANENT TEMPLE,

TO BE ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF

SHAKESPEARE,

WITH

INSCRIPTIONS AND DECORATIONS

Suitable to the OBJECTS Of it.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Title adopted for this Work ariſes, with the greateſt propriety, from the ſubject, in its two principal departments, of *writing*, and *acting*, theoretically and practically conſidered.

The foremoſt ornament in the latter article, (as *Shakeſpeare* was in the former) England could ever boaſt, and at leaſt equal to that of any other nation, having been afflicted with a ſevere fit of ſickneſs, in the ſpring of laſt year, all ranks of taſteful and elegant life were ſtricken with an univerſal concern, at the apprehenſion of ſuch a loſs; but which a wiſhed-for recovery ſoon forced to give place to as general a ſatisfaction.

The intereſting event, was celebrated by ſeveral ingenious writers, and attempted by the Author of this Work, in a ſhort *Latin* Poem, (to be introduced in the fourth Book) which proved ſo fortunate, as to pleaſe thoſe who are beſt qualified to judge of ſuch compoſitions. That approbation encouraged him, on his hearing of the intended inſtitution of a commemorative Jubilee in the honour of *Shakeſpeare*, to ſet about delineating the plan of a permanent Temple; which he humbly hopes to have executed in a manner that will not be judged unfavourably of by all admirers of theatric excellence.

It was thought proper that the inſcriptions ſhould be in *Latin*, as well as *Engliſh*; the one, for the ſake of learned Foreigners,

unacquainted with our language, and by whom we are now viſited, in greater numbers than uſual heretofore: the other, for the entertainment of our fellow-ſubjects, uninitiated in the poetic diction of ancient Rome.

The leading thoughts in both are ſimilar, but neither in the plain phraſing, nor figurative expreſſion, ſtrictly obſervant of each other, in order that an unfettered, free, and original air, might prevail in both.

They contain either an epitome of each piece in queſtion, or a confined alluſion to one chief ſcene; where a narrative of the whole drama, however ſuccinct and curſory, muſt be productive of intricacy and confuſion.

The inſcription over the Temple door, calculated to give the reader a juſt and reverential idea of the place, is to be farther illuſtrated by all the pictures within —— To the entire deſign, let thoſe bleſt with ample fortunes employ our ſeveral eminent artiſts, to give a practical exiſtence, which, through their merit, would probably not be deemed an unornamental addition to the other improvements of England's magnificent villas.

When entered into the Temple, the firſt object for the curious ſpectator's attention, is the great Poet; over whom is to be a ſun, riſing in all his glory, after having diſſipated and expelled from our Britiſh Theatre, the long incumbent clouds of Gothic ignorance and barbariſm, that are to be ſeen flying from the victorious luſtre, and underneath is to be read,

Barbaridûm exoriens ſcenæ Sol diſſipat umbras.

Dulneſs' dark ſhades fly SHAKESPEARE'S *ſolar Beams.*

Next to be conſidered, is the painted repreſentation of him, who hath beſt felt, and beſt expreſſed, what our tranſcendent *Author* wrote

wrote in the moſt towering efforts of his all-ſurpaſſing imagination. over whom, as his moſt faithful copyiſt, let a rainbow return in the moſt ſtriking manner, all the vivid and various colourings, which are imbibed from the great fountain of light; and within the ſweep of the arch be read this happily appoſite line from Virgil,

" *Mille trahens varios adverſo ſole colores.*

" *All lively tints from yonder ſun I draw.*"

On the right hand ſide of SHAKESPEARE is to begin the ſeries of choſen tragic exhibitions, which are

1° King LEAR, in the ſtorm.

2° MACBETH, with horror, confuſion, and diſmay on his countenance, at MACDUFF's declaration, that he had been untimely ript from his mother's womb.

3° Diſtracted CONSTANCE, lamenting the loſs of her ſon, prince ARTHUR.

4° RICHARD THE THIRD, when fallen under the victorious ſword of RICHMOND, he, with the gnaſhing of deſpair, upbraids Heaven for his diſgrace.

5° HAMLET, hearing his father's ghoſt, as he relates how he had been poiſoned.

6° ROMEO and JULIET, in the tomb ſcene.

Over theſe MELPOMENE is to be diſplayed, with all her attributes, and pointing to them, with a ſcroll in her hand, bearing theſe words,

En mea progenies.

Behold my progeny.

IN-

OTHELLO

OTHELLO has been purpoſely omitted for this reaſon; the blacking ſcreens, and renders incommunicable to ſpectators, all impaſſioned working of the countenance.

The comic ſeries is to be headed, from the left hand ſide of SHAKESPEARE, by

1° BENEDICT and BEATRICE, in their moſt ſpirited encounter, to be followed by,

2° CALIBAN, between the two ſailors.

3° TOUCHSTONE and ROSALIND, in the humourous ſcene of berhiming her name.

4° APEMANTUS and TIMON, railing at each other.

5° SHYLOCK and PORTIA, in the ſenate ſcene.

6° Cornuted FALSTAFF with THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR, and other ſpectators of his vicious folly.

Over theſe the *comic* muſe, in contraſt to the *tragic*, is to be ſeen with her attributes, and a ſcroll in her hand, as ſhe points to them, bearing theſe words,

Hæc mea ſunt.

Theſe belong to me.

On the cieling, APOLLO is to be painted, looking affectionately towards SHAKESPEARE, as his favourite ſon; and upon the part oppoſite, MERCURY, pointing to the Actor, whoſe exertion alone could equal the fire of that ſuperior, and priviledged mortal, whom APOLLO delights to behold.

Thus the compoſition will hold together, progreſſively unfolding and illuſtrating the inſcription over the Temple door.

IN-

INSCRIPTIO
TEMPLI
EXTERIOR.

Stat, non MELPOMENES Templum, hic, Ædesve THALIÆ:
Aſt, ambarum inſtar SHAKSPERI nobile Fanum.

THE
EXTERIOR INSCRIPTION
FOR THE
TEMPLE.

Nor gay THALIA's comic *Fane* ſtands here,
Nor ſolemn *Temple* of the TRAGIC MUSE;
But SHAKESPEARE's Shrine, they emulous have rais'd!

SHAKSPERUS.

ECCE poetarum princeps qui dramatis artem
Excoluere; abeant simul *Æschylus*, atque *Sophocles*
Euripides; vanumque potens quam *Græcia* fudit
Roma vetus, *Soccoque* minor, pariterque *Cothurno*
Nil simile ingenuit, nec *Roma* recentior orbis
Christiadum; vel nunc tibi quæ nihil ante ferendum
Gallia jactatrix optat, frustràque laboras
Dicite, Io pæan, *Angli*, gaudete merentes
Talem habuisse virum, qui, sic meruisse, decorum
Communi assensu officium celebrare tenetis.
Ingenii vires tanti cui pandere fas sit?
Vanum opus — ingenti cum ferur numine vates
Nil mortale sonat — Naturâ est major imago!

SHAKE-

SHAKESPEARE.

BEHOLD the prince of all dramatic bards;
Tho' *Greece* ſhou'd boaſt her *Æſchylus*, and join
Euripides to *Sophocles*, with thoſe
Of comic merit to ſupport her claim.

In competition leſs can dare to ſtand
Either the *Sock* or *Buſkin* of old *Rome*;
Of *chriſtian* date the *new* has no pretence.

To him, proud *Gallia*, you muſt yield the palm,
And own, however great, your efforts ſhort
Of his all-graſping comprehenſive thought.

Albion rejoice, and celebrate the name
That beams immortal honour on thine iſle;
SHAKESPEARE of THEE, and THOU of SHAKESPEARE worthy!

Who can th' extent of ſuch a genius trace,
And who portray the features of his mind?
Vain were th' attempt, for when th' impulſive glow
Of energy divine inflames his ſoul,
He's more than mortal as he thinks and writes!
He tow'rs above the imagery of Nature,
That wond'ring ſtares at his creative power!

GARRICKIUS.

SIC ſitus exultat genialem propter amorem
SHAKSPERI effigiem mirandi; unde inclyta nobis
Fama theatralis devolvit; plurimus ille
Tot tantiſque probat genium non partibus impar;
Comica ſeu facili ridet certamina luſu;
Carminis aut tragici perſonas reddit, amantes
Sævas, terrificas, miſeras: lachrymabile munus!

Hinc *veluti in ſpeculo* collecta reflectitur orbis
Gloria Phœbei; noſter ſic *Roſcius* ore;
Sic oculis; animum divino affiante poetâ
Fervidus accepit, patrioſque reverberat ignes.

GAR-

GARRICK.

THUS to be plac'd, t' have SHAKESPEARE full in view,
Exults yon picture of th' adopted heir;
Who by his Acting ſoars to ev'ry *Height*,
Where his great Sire's effulgent ſpirit ſhone,
When paſſion fires, or melts the tragic ſcene.

But if with milder luſtre *He* diſplay
The beauteous glowing of *Thalia*'s charms;
The other proves a poliſh'd mirrour: whence,
Th' enliv'ning beams collected, are thrown back
With new refulgence, and encreaſe of glory!

Yes; *England's Roſcius* to her *Drama*'s chief
Returns improv'd the ſplendour he receives!

TRAGICA SERIES.

LEARIUS REX.

LURIDA tempeſtas pluviam depellit, et imbres
Grandine commiſti terrent hominesque ferasque;
Detonuere poli; rutilis Cælum ignibus ardet!

En fenio fractus, natarum flebile crimen,
Rex pater, hoſpitio depulſus, ad æthera clamat.
" Sævius haud terris monſtrum caput extulit uſquam
" Quam ſobolem ingratam, naturæ dedecus — eheu
" Non vobis venti, non vobis fulgura, regnum
" Captus mente dedi — nunc vos clementius in me
" Quam mea progenies agitis — ſpes unica adeſto
" Dulce ſonans, gratumque patri, *Cordelia*, nomen!

The

The TRAGIC SIDE.

KING LEAR.

AN horrid tempeſt ſhook the low'ring ſky,
'Midſt rattling ſhow'rs the forked lightnings fly;
And as if Heav'n loud thunders raging tore,
Nor man, nor beaſt can ſtand the wild uproar. —

Yet, aged *Lear*, a father, and a king,
(Ought kindneſs in extreme ſuch treatment bring?)
Is now expos'd to the inclement ſtorm,
Like a proud ruin his majeſtic form
Appears. ——— ——— ——— ——— ———
——— rebellious daughters, grief impleads ———
" Can filial nature ſuch heart-rending deeds
" Commit? the warring elements are kind,
" Compar'd to them — rain — lightning — hail — and wind;
" I gave no kingdoms, partial unto ye;
" Nor act ye now ungratefully to me.
" The child I've injur'd is the only true,
" Much wrong'd *Cordelia*, all my hope's in you.

MAC-

MACBETHUS

PERFIDA *Duncani* in ſomno, (dux fœmina facti)
Mors, ut atrox regi jugulum perfoderat enſis;
Horribili ſignum cladi prorupit — anhela
Scotia; *Macbethi* genitrix, madefacta cruore:
Quem mala regnandi rabies per rura, per urbes
Effera profudit; matres, puerosque, patresque
Virgineumque chorum nullo diſcrimine mactat.

Laté ingens equitat terror, pavor occupat omnes —
Deſeruere domos, patriamque, inſtante tyranno,

Diſcat, ut imperio, et vitæ, quis terminus, hæreſque
Evocat atram *Hecaten* ſibi, fatidicaſque ſorores,

Sanguineam in mensâ larvam pallebat amici,

Sceptraque natorum ſacro diademate regni
Tempora cinctorum pallet, *ſylvaſque moventes*
Ut miles referat motûrum, et mirabile dictû —
Ut, *matri præreptus amor*, MACDUFFIUS heros
Numine ſelectus ſceleratas ſumere pœnas
Vindicat uxorem, natos, populumque gementem.

MACBETH.

MACBETH's dire conſort, with infernal mind,
Urg'd her *new Thane* a regicide to prove.
The gracious *Duncan* murder'd in his ſleep,
Glares the dire blazon of inteſtine war.

Hence groaning *Scotland*, drench'd with natives' blood,
Such ſcenes of terror ev'ry day alarm'd,
As forc'd her ſons to abdicate their homes,
And from the tyrant's rage, ſeek foreign climes.—

The fell barbarian mercileſs proceeds
'Gainſt age, 'gainſt ſex, 'gainſt parents, and their babes;
All victims to his wrath where he's oppos'd.—

But curious grown from Fate to learn his doom,
The wayward ſiſters he conſults (their charms
Broke off by his intruſion on their rites)
To heal a mind diſtraught, ſince *Banquo*'s ghoſt
Fill'd up his chair, and ſcar'd him from the feaſt:
Thence more appall'd, a[illegible] he view'd,
In number, *eight*, ſucceeding to the throne.

What ſtill moſt te[illegible] when he heard
How, *Birnham wood* [illegible]
And that *Macduff* was from *his mother's womb*
Untimely ript — his haughty ſpirit ſhrunk. —
Victorious *Fife*, commiſſion'd from above,
For wife, for children, and for king aſſaſſin'd,
Avenged the cauſe of *Scotland* and his own.

REX

REX JOHANNES.

GALFRIDI vidua, *Arthurum* CONSTANTIA mater
Filiolum occisum queritur; quem victor acerbus
Insidians solio puerum detraxit, at illa
Insanit; terræque sedens miserabile pectus
Verberat — hoc planctu noctemque, diemque fatigat

" Me — me — aveant reges; quid sit fortuna docebo:
" Supplicibusque crement manibus pia thura dolori.

KING JOHN.

HAIL royal widow, that ſhould be a queen;
Thy little murder'd *Arthur*'s fancied mien
Adorns vacuity, and ſeems to ſmile,
As of her tears a mother he'd beguile.

But no words tun'd by his melodious breath
Delight thine ear — he's gone — and thou'rt in love with death.

Why, cruel *John*, cou'd not ambition ſpare
Thy brother *Jeffry*'s unoffending heir;
Why heap on *Conſtance* ruin, and deſpair?

Such anguiſh muſt all intellects confound —
No throne now left her but the naked ground;
She ſtrikes her breaſt, and with this plaintive lay,
Wails the whole night, nor ends the live-long day:
" Here I and ſorrow ſit — ('tis Fate's decree)
" Ye ſov'reigns of the earth come bow to me!

RICARDUS TERTIUS.

IMPERIUM obtinuit primorum ſtrage virorum,
Juſtitiam, leges, Naturæ et jura peroſus;
Reges, *Henricum*, fratremque, et pignora amoris
Suſtulit é medio, truculentâ mente, *Ricardus*,
Aſturuſque, toro, et morti promoverat *Annam*.

Cognatas umbras menti fera ſomnia pingunt;
Sin excuſſa quies; — vanæ excutiuntur et umbræ.

Religione tegit facinus, quia ſanguinis ultro
Prodigus humani, latices effuderat — omnis
Ordo gemit populi; juga ſolvere barbara jurat.
Richmondus petitur; Gallorum elapſus ab oris
Advolat in patriam — cecinerunt horrida bellum
Claſſica — *Boſworthi* in campo pugnatur: acerba
Funera denſantur — mediis in millibus ardet

RICHARD

RICHARD THE THIRD.

BY frequent maſſacre of *England*'s chiefs
An enemy to Nature, and her laws,
To juſtice, and inheritance by right,
Bane of ſixth *Henry*; *Edward*, and his ſons,
A brother's ſons, cruel, remorſeleſs *Richard*,
The wav'ring *Anna* woo'd to love and death:
And, crown'd aſſaſſin, leaps into the throne;
Aſſumes Religion's maſk to veil his crimes,
For all the blood he wantonly had ſhed!

His kindred's ghoſts [illegible] in dreams;
But ſleep o'ercome, he [illegible] of them no more.

The ſubjects groan beneath [illegible] galling yoke,
And ſigh in private to depoſe the tyrant. —
Richmond invited from the *Gallic* ſhore,
Arrives, and leads their troops to *Boſworth Field*.
There ruthleſs ſlaughter riots all around.

Regia sævities — at *Equo* privatur — ab omni

Milite clamat *Equum, regni pretio*; fundendo.

Impatiens, volat huc; illuc, sua prælia jactans.

" Sex *Richmondi*, hodiè; dextrâ hac cecidere, morantem

" *Richmondum* quoties rauco vox increpat ore!

BY frequent mandate of King's edict

Convenere! — enses rapido mucrone corusçant;

Vulnera vulneribus geminantur, et Ictibus Ictus —

Rex Fato opprimitur — Victori cedere regnum,

Cogitur; infrendet moriens " æterna repetate

" Nox ruat in terras, perituro prologus orbi. —"

Richard unhors'd impetuouſly cries out,
" A horſe, a horſe, my kingdom for a horſe."
This way and that, as reſtleſs fury drives
He boaſts, " Six *Richmonds* have I ſlain to day."
And thus upbraids, " *Richmond*, I ſay, come forth,
" *Richard* is hoarſe with daring thee to battle."
They meet! — what horrid blows they interchange!
Their trenchant ſwords like rapid lightning flaſh;
Each warrior ſeems an army in himſelf —
Wound follows wound, till *Richard*, ſpent, o'erpow'rd,
Yields both the throne, and victory to *Richmond*,
With execrable wiſh — " May ſudden darkneſs
" Whelm this vile globe in everlaſting night. —"

HAMLETIUS.

HAMLETIUM vidiſſe juvat, genitoris ut umbra
Flebilis evolvit genus execrabile fati.

" Dulcia in hortenſi carpebam ſomnia lecto;
" Inſtrumenta necis vitam rapuere: coronam
" Principi — ut inceſto melius faveatur amori
" Artifices frater ſceleris, ſimul impia conjux,
" Connubii ſpecie larvant ſua crimina, falſo
" Dania decipitur rumore; memento: valeque. —

Quum rex narraret, princeps inferbuit ore;
Uritur: æneo pectus magis ardet igne!
Naturæque vices Actor dum fedulus [illegible],
Anxia corda premit patriæ pietatis imago.

HAM-

HAMLET.

WHAT ſcene ſo moving as when *Hamlet* views
His father's ghoſt, in ſteel completely arm'd;
And hears the dreadful proceſs of his death? ——
" While in the garden ſleep ſecurely ſeal'd
" My eyes to reſt — there an hir'd ruffian pour'd
" A baneful diſtillation in mine ear,
" Which ſoon defeated ev'ry ſpark of life;
" Guilty contrivance of a wife and brother:
" That, uncontroul'd in their inceſtuous love,
" They might with wedlock's name gloſs o'er their crimes.
" An artful rumour *Denmark*'s ear deceiv'd,
" That my deceaſe was Nature's work alone;
" But which my ſon forget not to revenge.
" I muſt depart — farewel — remember me."

Ætna ne'er ſhook with more convulſive throes
Than the young prince's boſom — to revenge
He ev'ry thought, and faculty devotes.

Here view our ROSCIUS *all pathetic pow'r*
Diſplay; and make us like his Hero feel
A ſon's reſentment for a murder'd ſire!

ROMEUS ET JULIETA.

FABULA *Veronæ* teneros depingit amores
Romei in eximiam formâ et virtute puellam;

Illa simul molli tentatur pectora flammâ:
Sed genus adversum generi cunctamina plectit
Connubio; tanta est inter discordia cives.
Tibaltique rudis fatalia vulnera rumpunt
Spes omnes thalami — miser exul aburbe recessit
Romeus — illa, fidem sponso servare, recusat
Conjugium Paridis; simulatâ morte, sepulchri
Auxilioque, piam fraudem, non impia celat.

Illico fama volans fugitivi perculit aures
Romei; et attonitum remeare impellit amorem,
Ante ratum *Monachi* tempus; medicamine certo.
Inde mali labes; nam cum conspexerit amens
Julietæ exequias, avido bibit ore venenum.

ROMEUS

ROMEO AND JULIET.

THE Tragic Muſe in ſoft, and melting ſtrains,
Paints the ſad ſcene *Verona*'s wall contains,
Of *Romeo*'s love for *Juliet* the fair,
To marriage vows they'd inſtantly repair.
But party-rage th' afflicted city ſway'd;
Their houſes adverſe, happineſs delay'd:
And what envenom'd more the fatal ſtrife,
Brave *Romeo*'s ſword took haughty *Tibalt*'s life.

Th' unhappy exile is compell'd to roam
From *Juliet* far, and fly his native home:
Ambitious parents th' artleſs maid aſſail,
To wed count *Paris* — pray'rs and threat'nings fail —

Not to eſpouſe the object of her hate,
And play her lover falſe — to cruel fate
To have reſign'd her breath ſhe's taught to feign,
By drug, blood-chilling in each ſtagnant vein;
But for a ſtated time — The *Fry'r*'s beheſt,
Fearleſs ſhe wou'd aſſuage her pain to reſt,

Protinus è gremio fingentis funera fumi

Affurgit virgo; juvenis miratur, ovatque;

Amplexus blandè nectunt: sed nuncia mortis

Signa premunt, — causamque refert; perterrita clamat

Illa — " quis et miseram me, et te jam perdidit — ergo

" Ad vitam redii, ut moriens ploretur amicus!

" *Romee* crudelis — non sic morieris inulte;

" Non — simul ire placet; dextram mors pronuba jungit.

And when the moment opportune were come,
He ſhou'd releaſe her from the dreary tomb;
To live anew for her lov'd *Romeo*'s arms,
And dedicate to him her virgin charms.
Fame's buſy tongues that joy to ſpread ill news,
Soon all around young *Juliet*'s death diffuſe;
Which croak'd on *Romeo*'s ear, with fury torn
On wings of expeditious love he's born
To *Capulet*'s interring vault — enrag'd deſcries,
Where, ſtretch'd in funeral pomp, his *Juliet* lies.
From noxious viol, with fell poiſon fraught,
Precipitate he drinks, t' extinguiſh thought.

No ſooner done, than *Juliet* from her ſhroud
Riſes, beholds, with rapture ſpeaks aloud —
" Come love, come *Romeo*, haſte, thy *Juliet* calls —"
They gaze! ſmile! embrace! — he pants, totters, falls,
With pangs convulſive ſeiz'd — ſhe aſks what cauſe
On both ſuch unexpected ruin draws.

The fact related — with deſponding eyes
She views him breathleſs, and diſtracted cries,
" Come poniard wed whom deſtiny denies.
" This tribute to my *Romeo*'s love I owe;
" Now join'd in death, together we will go.

The

COMICA SERIES.

VIX OPERÆ PRETIUM.

CONNUBIUM *fugio*, BENEDICTI, non *bene dictum*.
Atque *Beatrices* innuptos ducere soles
Vota simul fallunt; orituri insignia morbi.

Ante obitum nemo, perfunctaque munia vitæ
Audeat effari, quodnam sibi fata parârint
Fœderis auspicium socialis; nubere: vel non.

At simul affulsit dubitanti debita Virgo! —
Audiat hic blandæ modulamina dulcia vocis;
Affusumque jocis Decus! — aureolos-ve retorquent
Verborum globulos, grato diserimine, et ictû?
Dum veneres colit, obtutu suspensus in uno:
Vah — rationis opes frustrà obvertuntur, amoris
Vincla recusantem, et totâ subnocte frementem,
Dîque deæque omnes suavi in luctamine rident.

Si puerum in cunis non devovere parentes,
Quisque *Beatricen* speret, foveatque repertam.

The

The COMIC SIDE.

MUCH ado about NOTHING.

I'LL *never marry* — *ſoft and fair*; good ſir;
That *Benedict* for making a raſh vow
Be not impeach'd; and to recanting words
Submiſſive, in ſucceeding time, be forc'd;
When the fair object by appointing Heav'n
To rule o'er all the paſſions of his ſoul,
He ſhall with eyes of fond affection view:
And her ſoft, ſweet, inſinuating words
With raptur'd, and extatic ears imbibe,
Then pleas'd reſign a ſov'reignty to her,
In all the ſprightly bick'ring of diſcourſe!

At the vain ſtruggle 'twixt oppoſing reaſon,
And the imperial ſway of beauty's pow'r,
Venus, her ſon, and all the *Paphian* court
But laugh; well knowing how the ſtrife will end.
Let fair ones be to merit only kind!
Each *Benedict* a *Beatrice* will find!

TEM-

TEMPESTAS.

CALLIBANUM, *Sycorax*, fætum tulit aſpera mater
Dedecus humani generis! nec forma, nec actus
Unde virum dicas; offendunt hiſpida vultus
Indicia — ejulat — nec mens, nec lingua, nec oris
Fabula, ſunt hominis: vivit quoque more ferarum,
Horridus auditû, et viſû illætabilis, error!
Ebrietas odit triſti dare pocula monſtro. —

Quæ ſpecies? extra *verum*, *pulchrumque*, vagantis
Naturæ eſt ſoboles — aſt execrata parenti!

THE TEMPEST.

IT's beaſtly mother gave offenſive birth
To *Caliban* a ſtill more odious fright.

Scarce it of mankind aught in form, or mind,
Can boaſt — it's notions with diſtortion crude
Miſrepreſent all objects that approach —

Speaks it? 'tis horror! — moves it? a diſgrace
To human act — it's modes of kindneſs ſhock:
And ev'n *Ebriety* deteſts to know it.

Thro' *Sycorax*, it's dam, this monſter whelp'd
Is ſhrieking nature's moſt abhorred ſhame.

UT TIBI VIDEATUR.

COTICULA ingenii, haud exors tamen ille ſecandi,
Scurrantis ſpeciem, veſtemque aſſumpſit ineptam.
Hunc *Roſalinda* crepat; gaudet contendere verbis
Sic ſale conditis, ut non gens attica temnat.

Non ignara mali *filio* ſuccurrere geſtit.
Atque recenſet onus, placidumque levamen amoris
Phæbe crudeli, facilem quæ ſpernit amicum.

Dum rhythmi latices pleno de pectore fundens
Inſculptum arboribus recinebat *Morio* nomen
Virginis, admixtum numeris in carmine vili;
Hanc ſatiram *Roſalinda* repercutit ore faceto:
Utrius argutum laudat ſpectator acumen!

AS YOU LIKE IT.

TOUCHSTONE the quaint, and *Roſalind* the gay,
For joke, for pun, make emulous eſſay;
A jeſter he proclaim'd — her ſprightly wit
Returns him daſh for daſh, and hit for hit,
With Attic ſalt, and brilliancy of phraſe,
That often puts his Foolſhip in a maze.

To diff'rent tempers varying her mood,
She *Phœbe* rates for having love withſtood,
Yet feels it's pow'rful influence on her mind,
That to diſtreſt *Orlando* ſhe'd prove kind —
But the fit time not come; ſhe ſtill purſues
Her ſportive ſtrain — ſagacious *Touchſtone* views
Thro' folly's vizard every thought diſguis'd;
And boldly ſpeaks what e'er he hath furmiz'd;
Now in a blithe, now in a ſerious vein,
Or rhimes abuſeth of her lovingſwain,
Fondly engrav'd, or pendant on each tree;
Which ſhe retorts with poignant repartee:
He replies — ſhe rallies — each well-play'd part
Charms ev'ry ear, and gladdens ev'ry heart!

TIMON ATHENIENSIS.

ASPERITATE ferox *Apemantus* dulcia mundi
Blandimenta fugit, culparum cenſor acerbus,
(Quas fragilis Natura parit, veniamque repoſcit)
Exultat ſævas aliis effundere voces.

Crimen, in exceſſû, virtus, pariterque receſſû;
Stat ratio in mediis: ſapienti regula conſtet.

Prodigus exhauſto terrarum fœnore *Timon*
Et paraſitorum acri deſuetudine adurens
Se vovet haud populo miſcerier; antra ferarum
Aut in deſerto ſemotam condere vitam
Malle; quies animum ſic exoptata bearet.

Invidet inde fremens *Apemantus*, talia amicum
Timonem tentaſſe: recalcitrat illico *Timon*,
Et porro, atque retro convitia jactat uterque.

Non bene rivales inhoneſtæ præmia famæ
Commeruere; — habeatis par inamabile fratrum!

TIMON OF ATHENS.

ROUGH *Apemantus* of unpoliſh'd mind,
Hatred, diſlike, and horror of mankind,
Conceiv'd; from all life's blandiſhments averſe,
Opprobious taunts inſulting wou'd rehearſe;
'Gainſt venial faults, to which from Nature prone,
Too virtuous elſe, our ſpecies ſhe'd diſown.
Avoid extremes of little or too much;
He ſafeſt ſteers who can the mid-way touch.
Vain glorious *Timon*, now of pomp bereft,
And ſcarce a wreck of all his thouſands left,
Forſaken by a paraſitic crew,
Who from their friends' exhauſted coffers flew.
Sudden adopts the melancholy plan,
To live ſequeſter'd from perfidious man;
And ſeek a refuge in the foreſt drear,
Where he ne'er more of fallacy ſhou'd hear;
Preferring among ſavage beaſts to roam,
And in the wilderneſs to fix his home.
Stern *Apemantus* had no ſooner learn'd,
That *Timon* to *Miſanthropy* was turn'd,
Than he rebuk'd him for th' amazing change,
" Cities why quit 'mongſt fellow brutes to range"?
Timon replies, " muſt thou alone be bleſt,
" And taſte in ſolitude the ſweets of reſt."
" Aye, 'tis my charter; which you now invade." —
" Abſurd prerogative! — thus they inveigh'd. —
Yet from their odious frenzy hope applauſe;
An impious rivalſhip 'gainſt ſocial laws!

MERCATOR VENETUS.

JUDÆI Natura rapax perfundere gentes
Chriſtiadum gaudet — *venetus mercator.* APELLÆ

Elicuit certo reddendos tempore nummos.
At mora ſi fuerit — carnis tunc libra ſecanda eſt
Contiguæ cordi — voti reus, addere calcar
Alterius fato, tardantis creditor auri
Exultat; ferrumque acuit; plebs, atque ſenatus
Carnifici exclamant, " *jus ſummum injuria ſumma*"
Nequicquam — precibus duros vafer, obſerat aures.

Inclyta cauſidici mentitur *Portia* formam. —
" Carnis purpureæ, devotam à pectore mulctam
" Execuiſſe licet, penſans quam pondere libram
" Dat trutina, at nihiloque minus ſit, pluſve, periclo
" Theſauri, et vitæ; ſic fert ſententia legis.
" Ulteriuſque tibi caveas, ne guttula cultro

THE

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

T' Avenge the *chriſtian* cauſe againſt a *jew*
Avonian Shakeſpeare bloody *Shylock* drew,
Who lent his money not for lucre ſake,
But that a pound of fleſh his rage might take
From the fair breaſt of him he hated moſt,
Which prize, 'bove treaſur'd thouſands he wou'd boaſt.

The Time elaps'd the caution to withdraw,
Mercy between, and *ſpirit* of the law;
Venice' great doge, and ſenate ſtand diſmay'd,
Alike, to pardon, or controll afraid.

Shylock with proſpect of his wiſh elate,
His forfeit claims from the aſſembled ſtate;
And to cut neareſt from the fount of life:
Draws, with remorſeleſs grin, and whets the knife:

Sanguinis

" Sanguinis erumpat; scelus effudisse cruorem
" Clavis; opes parvo, vinaque, fenore habebis.

Ingemit *Hebræus*; crimen *Balthazarus* urget,
Imperat eloquio; turbâ plaudente, triumphat
Copia verborum felix, et gratia fandi!

All

All pray'rs for pity, with obdurate ears
Rejects — but lo — as ſent from Heav'n appears
The lovely *Portia* in *Balthazar*'s form,
Bleſt with each faculty to ſoothe, or ſtorm,
Gains on the wretch by ſeeming of his ſide,
But ſoon turns on him truth's impetuous tide:
To th' jew grown deſperate from over civil,
His ſecond *Daniel* glares a very devil.

" Now take a pound of fleſh, nor more, nor leſs,
" For ſo the letters of thy bond expreſs.
" If more, or leſs, thou certainly ſhalt die,
" That is a law to which there's no reply.
" Another bears, that if an alien ſhou'd
" Attempt the life, or ſhed a native's blood,
" He too muſt die." —— her eloquence prevails! ——
Defeated vengeance drops the knife and ſcales;
With iron tears it's diſappointment wails.
" Is this, thou chriſtian God, a *Juſtice-Hall*?"
Groans inwardly; retires; and damns them all.

HILARES VINDESORII UXORES.

EN balatro, mendax, thraſo, *Falſtaffius* ingens
Abnormis formâ, rudis, indigeſtaque moles,
Fluctuat, inflatamque trahens inglorius alvum
Palpitat, et titubat — ſub pondere carnis obeſæ!

Bellator linguâ, cautus tamen effugit enſes,
Mors quia ſit vitæ nunquam medicabilis horror.
Gloria poſt fatum, non delectabilis olli.
Heſternis laudem ducibus non mœret, honoris
Expers, exoſum virtuti, et futile corpus,
Cui Natura negat, præſtare, affectat amorem:
Connubii, uxores lepidæ, quas fallere nodum
Sollicitat, turpem ſtatuunt extinguere flammam.

Squalentes inter mappas, et lintea fœda
Preh! caput, exta, pedes, humeri, intorquentur eodem

The MERRY WIVES of WINDSOR.

A Braggart, liar, coward, and a knave,
All puff without, all worthleſſneſs within;
Lo; *Falſtaff* pants, a fluctuating waſte
Of monſtrous garbage, not of human fleſh!

Alien from honour, and bright glory's call,
He envies not the fame of yeſterday,
To virtuous victims of the warring pow'r,
In brave defence of all that man holds dear.

Depreſt with fat, with impotence, and age,
He'd fain be thought to feel love's am'rous flame,
And *Windſor's merry Wives*, with lewd diſplay
Of wanton, looſe, libidinous deſires,
Incontinent aſſails. In ſportive mood
They hear; reſolving on their cumb'rous wooer,
Juſt and repeated puniſhment to have.

Tegmine vimineo — ſervi —— intolerabile pondus
In fluvium ejecere — arridet conſcia turba.
Thameſis excoquitur porci pinguedine fuſâ
Qui ferrum ut candens refugis in ſibilat undis!
Volvitur in præceps; penitus, penituſque jacentem
Expeteret, tellus ſi non foret invia, fundum.

Eſt labor hic primus; ſceleri nec defuit alter.
Sortilegæ veteris lacera ſub veſte recondens
Nequitiem; egregié baculo vexatur: et angit.

Tertia pœna docet præfigere cornua cervi
Fronti ſeductoris; ut amplius addere ſigna
Dedecoris, timeat: quæ in eum converſa tulere
Innocuce uxores, ut ſint ſua munera fraudi.

Hinc, novus *Actæon* ſublimi culmine gaudet,
Conjugibus, pueris, ſenibus, rifibile monſtrum.

The

The firſt in *Buck-baſket at Datchet-Mead*,
Where, from amidſt foul linen cloſely pent,
And congregated ſtench of vapours rank,
Into the *Thames* ROTUNDITY is hurl'd,
With *Fat all melted! hiſſing hot!* — amaz'd,
The water ſtarts from it's huge flouncing gueſt!
And were the river's bottom ſunk to hell,
He down to hell precipitate had ſhot,
Alertly twinkling his alacrity in ſinking!

The next in ſhape of *Brentford*'s beldam ſwath'd.
The perſonage of ſpell-fraught witch, he ſuffer'd
Correctful baſtinado, for vile ſcheme
Of making chaſte young dames break marriage vows.

Their laſt device th' old lecher to entrap
Was, that he'd wear th' adornings of a buck —
Lo — what he meant on other heads to plant,
Our new *Actæon* brandiſher of, horns;
The ſcoff, joke, ſcorn, and ridicule of all.

THE SECOND BOOK

INVESTIGATES (in a New Manner)

The PROGRESS of the HUMAN MIND

In INVENTING the

DRAMA,

And CONDUCTING it to PERFECTION;

WITH A

CANDID DISQUISION

OF THE

RULES laid down by CRITICS.

THE SECOND BOOK

INVESTIGATES (in a New Manner)

The PROGRESS of the HUMAN MIND

BOOK II

In Inventing the

DRAMA

And CONDUCTING it to PERFECTION;

WITH A

CANDID DISQUISITION

OF THE

RULES laid down by CRITICS.

DRAMATIC GENIUS.

BOOK II.

ARISTOTTLE, and all the tribe of commentators, by your leave — becauſe I meditate a reſearch unattempted heretofore, and that,

Nullius addictus jurare in verba magiſtri.

I never entertained an implicit belief in any man's opinion, however long eſtabliſhed, impoſing, or even revered it's authority, if not ſupported by unbiaſſed reaſons of the mind, and unwarped ſenſibility of the heart, having always adopted for maxim, *amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, ſed magis amica Veritas*; that though the names of a *Plato*, or a *Socrates*, be valued or eſteemed, by no perſon more than by myſelf: yet, even the ſide of theſe honoured leaders, am I ready to leave, when ſummoned by reflection, to militate under the banner of truth, againſt the ſeduction of long preſcriptive error; as in the inveſtigation now propoſed, which, in a plain, obvious, and inviting manner, I thus purſue.

On the firſt formation of human ſociety, all the neceſſaries of life having been provided for, by the *mechanic arts*, the leiſure and happineſs, ſubſequent thereto, progreſſively led to an inveſtigation of

of the *politer*, whoſe faithfully exploring, and critically aſſiduous agents, were the faculties of *ſeeing* and *hearing*.

By that of *ſeeing*, are taken in all the ſcattered charms, varying graces, and diverſified beauties, obſervable in the multiform ranges, and almoſt infinitely varied diſpoſition of Nature's *protean* complexion; ever one as to eſſence, but ever changing as to appearance, whether in the more conſolidated texture of our earth, or more looſly flowing of the humid element, or ſtill more ſublimely flitting of the clouds, now frowningly embrowned with a majeſtic terror, or now gorgeouſly decorated, with all the vivid, and emulating tints of refracted light, that prove ſo richly ornamental to our atmoſphere; whoſe revolutionary womb, is often productive of tempeſts, meteors, and all thoſe tremendous phenomena, that are ſtared on by nations, uninformed, as the convulſive forerunners to an expiring world.

At other times, the faculty of *ſeeing* enjoys the glorious proſpect of a riſing ſun, after the virgin crimſon of the dawn hath bluſhingly heralded his all-chearing, all-colouring, all-beautifying approach; the more mildly ſhining moon, and ſtarry hoſt, having reſigned their delegated empire to his ſuperior luſtre.

By the inquiſitorial, ſcrutinizing, and delicate ſagacity of the ear, all practicable diverſity, and poſſible combination of ſounds, were explored; and as it fell to the painter's, and the ſculptor's lot, to repreſent all objects of the *ſeeing* faculty; ſo thoſe of *hearing*, became a lineal inheritance to the ſons of harmony.

The ultimate perfection of *Poetry*, reſults from taking in both. Of its various claſſes, however, I ſhall not treat here; but confine myſelf to the dramatic.

Now

Now, if ſuch of my readers, as are endowed with any ſhare of retroſpective ſenſibility, will give themſelves time to reflect how in their younger years, on reading ſome affecting tranſaction of illuſtrious, and unfortunate perſonages, they had not only wiſhed to have been ſpectators thereof; but that not being within the ſcope of poſſibility, how glad they ſhould have been, to behold a lively repreſentation of it, and even to act a part therein.

From a cauſe ſo ſimple, muſt, in all ages, the notion of dramatic exhibitions have ariſen; which knocks down, at one blow, all the voluminous, round-about, and puzlingly conjectural theories, —, therefore, let it be ſaid here, once for all, that learning without taſte, is a bewildering, ungracious, and offenſive monſter.

Another article which the commentators have been long embaraſſed about, is to account for the pleaſure reſulting from that impreſſive anguiſh, we feel ſtampt on our hearts, after the performance, or even the reading, of a tragedy.

Their ſolution is very ſingular. — This pleaſure, according to them, ſprings from a reflection of ourſelves not being in the diſtreſsful ſituation of the ſufferers, whoſe calamity we deplore; which notion, indeed, hath in a manner been univerſally adopted, and reverentially adhered to, through virtue of the poet *Lucretius*' admirable lines.

Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,
E terrâ alterius magnum ſpectare laborem:
Non quia vexari quemquam eſt jucunda voluptas,
Sed quibus ipſe malis careas quia cernere ſuave eſt.

Imitated.

To view from land, what waves roll mountain-high,
The ſuffering of a tempeſt-beaten ſhip,

Gives joy; not that we're pleas'd at others ruin;
But that we're safe from perils we behold.

So, by reflection, triumph in th' event.

Never was doctrine more falſe; nor more happily expreſs'd. As my reaſons for diſſenting from it are founded, 1°. on the internal conviction of my own feeling — 2°. on the candid report of many ingenious, and taſteful perſons, to whom I have applied for information; if, when they had been made to weep profoundly, by a tragic performance, the inſtant, and for ſome time continued pleaſure, thence emaning, ſprang from a reflection, of themſelves not having been the unhappy objects of the pathetic ſcene.

They all anſwered in the *negative*. This, coinciding with my own experiments ſet me upon tracing out ſome other cauſe, which, I flatter myſelf to have diſcovered. — *viz.* That our joy in *weeping at a Tragedy*, as well as in *laughing* at a *Comedy*, flows from one and the ſame ſource, ingenite *pride*; the firſt, and great ſpring of every human enjoyment and action.

From that primary cauſe, ariſes the happy diſpoſition in every boſom, through an artificial ſelf-complaiſance, not to deſire a change of condition with any other perſon, tho however exalted a ſtation; which, indeed, is the grand reconciler to all the eventful vicitſitudes of life.

We laugh at comic characters, for having that ſpecies of faults, or human failings, neither cognizable to, nor reprehenſible by penal laws; but which, nevertheleſs, ſinks them to an inferiority reſpectively to us.

Our joy for weeping at a tragedy, is derived from the ſecret ſatisfaction of our really being, (or at leaſt thinking ourſelves) in a

happier,

happier, or happier situation, to those unhappy victims of fortune's uncertainty?

—

Bursts of laughter proclaim our pleasure in one case, and the gushing of tears manifest it in the other. There are, it must be owned, some exceptions to this characteristic sensibility of the human system; but with such two-legged errors of Nature, I have nothing to do: because their moroseness can by no means infirm the validity of the doctrine proposed.

How often are spectators under a disagreeable restraint at our theatres, when, from a fear of being seen by those near and around them, they dare not venture to give a loose to their sighs, and tears, that with a bounteous indulgence, they might enjoy an effusive luxury of grief, for the affliction of others.

There is a very remarkable sentiment, and quite in point to our question, which *Virgil* makes *Æneas* utter to *Achates*, in the first book of his *Æneid*, as that hero views in the picture of the *Trojan* war, the chief disasters of his ruined country.

Sunt lachrymæ rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt.

Which imports, "This must be a humane and generous people, on whose shore, the tempest has thrown us; and therefore we may hope a kind and hospitable treatment from them.

—

On hearing a French gentleman, some years ago, at the *Parisian* theatre, thus rapturously exclaim, after the performance of a new tragedy — *O que j'ay bien pleuré! que j'en suis aise! que j'ay des obligations a l'Auteur* — "O how I have wept! I am glad on't! how much I am obliged to the author!" I politely put the question to him; if his extasy of sorrow, was caused by a reflection, of his not being in the place of those unhappy mortals, at whose hard

ſave, his tears had choaked utterance. Immediately, — the immediate, and obliging anſwer he gave me, was, *Point du tout monſieur; pas la moindre idée ne m'a paſſé dans la tete.* — "Not at all, ſir; nor even the leaſt idea, tending that way, came into my head.

In the caſe of a ſhip, as above alluded to, periſhing in a ſtorm, or of wretches ſurprized in a fire, or by the ſame ſinking in a river; all beholders quick as the glance of imagination, and not through the ſluggiſh impulſe of back-ſliding reflection, fly to their ſuccour in idea. Our hearts co-inſtantaneouſly expand with commiſeration towards them; our bowels yearn to give them immediate aſſiſtance: and we feel a ſenſe of joy, from the ſpontaneous emotion! Why? Becauſe, in ſuch acts, or even thoughts, of relieving, a tacit ſuperiority to the objects of our concern, is implied; wherefore thoſe we could not reſcue, whether friends, or even enemies, from deſtruction, we are pleaſed to have wept for (all we could do) as paying a tribute to the dignity of our Nature, and fruitful obligation. — "Poor Tom, or Jack, I could not ſave him, which I would at the "hazard of my life; however, I have been (as I ſhould) deeply "affected for his fate, and am pleaſed with myſelf for it."

Nay, tell the moſt hardened miſer, when ſuing to him as a creditor, in the behalf of an inſolvent debtor, that his too ſevere proceeding claſhes with the dictates of humanity; his pride is hurt, and his anſwer is — "Sir, I can feel as well as you, or any other "man, for a proper object, but this fellow," &c. — So the moſt worthleſs among us, would be ſorry to be thought devoid of our charter-motto,

Humani nihil a me alienum puto.

"I have a fellow feeling for my kind —

After

Other auxiliary proofs, in ſupport of this new hypotheſis, may be deduced from what is daily obſervable, in the common affairs of life. Do we not take a greater pleaſure in compaſſionating the adverſity of a friend, than in rejoicing at his exaltation in fortune, above us? The reaſon is obvious, becauſe ſuch a change deſtroys a ſubordinate dependence, that was ſo flattering to our *pride*, and alarms it with a jealous apprehenſion, of our being held, though meerly in fancy, in a ſtate of inferiority to the newly elevated.

How pleaſed do children often appear, and congratulate their infant pride (to them an unknown cauſe) for having yielded a generous compaſſion to the miſery of others. With what joy do many of them delight to give charity to beggars; nay, ſolicit their parents, or thoſe entruſted with the care of them, to furniſh their little and eager hands, wherewithal to alleviate the poor man's indigence, (which ought to be encouraged) and not a little ſatisfied are they, with their tender feeling, even ſometimes to tears, on ſuch beneficent occaſions.

Let us now, from the uncorrupted ſtate of infancy, turn for a moment, with a revering eye, to contemplate the divine emblem of all purity, and innocence; who, while in this world, found the moſt exquiſite comfort to ariſe from a *feeling* of, and *lamenting* for the miſerable ſituation of degenerate mortals; delighting to be called, *The man of ſorrow*, by excellence —What a picture! *Et videns civitatem flebat ſuper illam.* "Beholding *Jeruſalem* he wept at her unhappy ſtate."

Suffice it to hint (leſt it ſhould rather be thought profane to dwell too long thereon) ſo ſacred an inſtance in a work like this — A chearing conſolation, however, againſt all the hereditary afflictions of life, may be hence educed; inaſmuch as what is *purely ſentimental* is elucidated by what is *truly philoſophical*, and that they both are crowned

crowned with the triumphant rays of truth, in the example, and by the authority of revelation: which indicates, our being degraded to a condition, beneath that of our Heavenly origin; and that to be generously affected for the unhappiness of others, is an irrefragable proof of our descent.

But to return from so sublime a meditation, to the humbler purpose of this book, it is not improper to take notice here, of a groundless assertion, derived to us from the commentators, which declares, that *Greece*, consisting of several republicks, her natives chose, by preference, unfortunate monarchs for the subjects of their tragedies, to inspire the people with notions, contemptuous of, and abhorrent from royalty.

This doctrine, at its first appearance, wears a complexion of probability, which, on a closer enquiry, vanisheth. — The French, a people devoted to their sovereigns, have ever delighted in seeing the princes of the earth unhappy on their stage; and had long reproached us, for encouraging what they called, *La tragedie Bourgeoise*. — yet of late years, from a more intimate acquaintance with our philosophical works, &c. and their thence learning to more duly appreciate the value of man, in whatever station, they have not been shocked at the imitated scenes of our *George Barnwell*, and *The Gamester*, may have endured, and been affected by them, as legitimate children of the *tragic muse*: yet can a pleasure arise from the reflection of our not being in the place of that condemned criminal, any more than of the proscribed *Jane Shore*, or of *Lear*, by reason of the improbability?

Now, why even among us, are never to be seen the same brilliant audiences at *George Barnwell* as at the *Distrest Mother*, or there would probably appear at a well-written *Iphigenia*, notwithstanding the madness of the brother, or the sacrificing of the sister, because so

to the torments from us, ought to be leſs affecting themes for Britiſh hearts, than the ignominious ſuffering of an amiable youth, decoyed to proſtigacy, and an uncle's murder, by that moſt dangerouſly alluring fyren, an hypocritic, veteran, and deſigning courtezan.

But, it is quite otherwiſe with the polite world here; and why, pray? Becauſe, to weep, for ſuch an offender, muſt, in their vain opinions, ſink them beneath their rank; conſequently take from, and not add to, their pride: wherefore, they have no pleaſure in ſhedding tears, at what they call *low-life* cataſtrophes.

Hence we may, without forcing matters, conclude, that the reaſon why the Greeks, Romans, French, Engliſh, &c. receive more pleaſure from the tragic repreſentations of ſovereigns in diſtreſs, and that in proportion to their foregone greatneſs, than from the exhibited calamities of inferior mortals, is, becauſe they give our pride an opportunity, as it were, of raiſing us above them, by thus benignly lamenting for their diſaſters.

From an ignorance of this principle, the plodding commentators have been led into a now obvious error, in accounting for that effect; by ſaying, the poets made it their buſineſs, to fix upon heroic characters, which ſhould, for ſome faults, deſerve their unhappineſs, yet, for ſome virtues, by way of counterpoiſe, be deemed objects not quite unworthy of compaſſion. A ſtrange coinage this, in the mint of reaſoning, to account for the currency of our tears, at tragic exhibitions; and not leſs abſurd, in my opinion, than *Boſſu*'s for writing epic poems.

Commentatores! ſtupidum pecus!

O Commentators! what a ſtupid herd!

Did *Shakeſpeare* ever make a choice of his dramatic heros upon this principle? Did any of our now living authors? let them lay their hands to their boſoms, and candidly own — No.

For

For, when either in reading, or thinking, a subject presented itself, as one very proper for the stage, because calculated to move the passions; and the poets believed they might shine in the execution, which, in all likelihood, would be productive both of fame, and profit, they immediately proceeded thereon, without any further ceremony or conjuration whatsoever.

The Grecian bipartite motto for tragic productions was, Φόβος καὶ Ἔλεος "Terror, and compassion," which may not improbably be farther arranged under four heads,

1° The *Admirable*.

2° The *Pitiable*.

3° The *Terrible*.

4° The *Horrible*.

1° The *Admirable* prevails in those pieces, where, according to the remarkable words in *Pope*'s excellent prologue to *Cato*, the intent is

To make mankind in conscious virtue bold,
Live o'er each scene, and be what they behold.

as when we see the self-devoted hero of *Utica*, a *Regulus*, and others of that complexion, where the share of human affliction, which their voluntary heroism imposes on them, is absorpt in our admiration of their magnanimously soaring above fortune, braving death, and all sufferings of the human frame, in their arduous pursuit of glory, and fame's immortal wreath.

2° The *Pitiable*, is where the misery of the chief agents, results from perplexing occurences, precipitate mistakes, errors not from a bad design, and where the leading causes to the catastrophe, are so subordinate thereto, and so unimportant in our consideration, as to leave us in a free, and uncontrolled indulgence of our sorrow; as

in

in Romeo and Juliet; in *Isabella*, altered from the *Fatal Marriage*, by Mr. Garrick, adds to the standard of dramatic genius, than it had been encreased by it's author.

3° The *terrible* appears in the displaying of those characters, where innate fortitude, seduced by bad example, and hardened by advancing years, commits actions of the utmost daring, which, however, for their atrocious cruelty, cannot be adequate objects of our admiration; nor the perpetrators of them, of our pity, when we see them perish: as for instance, in *Richard*, and *Macbeth*. Many amazing examples, of such erroneous, and sinful intrepidity, might be quoted from the lives of the American buccaneers, equal to, or rather exceeding the hardiest adventuring that can be produced to us from the Greek, or Roman story. At the representation of such saints in heroism, as the above-mentioned Scotch and English tyrannous usurpers, neither *admiring* their misdeeds, nor *pitying* the disasters which befall them, we behold, as it were, in a neutral state, between the two sensations, their catastrophe, and with a philosophical indifference, as an event to which we can easily reconcile ourselves, not only thinking it should have been so, but even wished it might, and finally approve its having happened.

4° The *terrible* is displayed in those scenes, whose action, so far from admiring, we abominate; so far from pitying, we cry out against, we shudder at, and, consequently, cannot be in a state of unagitated mediocrity between the two, as in viewing the *terrible*. Every nerve now takes the alarm; the blood is curdled, and each fibre bristled up to an escaping abhorrence from the violent inroad against Nature, and all her feelings. So far from feeling any return of pride, from such objects of our execrating concern; we detest a participation of existence, with such monsters that degrade the whole human system; when a *Medea* murders her own children; when *Atreus* feasts *Thyestes*, his brother, with a murdered

for [illegible] by [illegible]
butchered, or [illegible] eyes, &c.
When *Electra* encourages from the [illegible] her brother *Orestes*
murdering their mother *Clytemnestra*, &c.

ΚΛ. Ὁ Τέκνον, Τέκνον,
Οἰκτῖρον, [illegible]
Ὃν [illegible]
ΗΛ. Ἔκτεινα, [illegible]
ΚΛ. Ὤμοι, [illegible]

CLYTEM. My ſon, my ſon, have pity on the womb that bore thee. —— Oh! I am wounded.
ELECT. Strike home, and if thou canſt redouble every blow.
CLYTEM. Ah me! —— Why ſtab again?

At a repreſentation of this paſſage, an *Athenian* audience is ſaid to have ariſen from their ſeats, and run from the place of performing it with outcries of univerſal indignation.

It is not amiſs to ſtart the following queſtion here: Why great Tragic Writers and Actors, nay ſometimes but midling ones, have by the generality of mankind been held in higher eſtimation than thoſe of equal eminence in the Comic department? —— The anſwer is, that the pleaſure derivable to us from our generouſly weeping for the misfortune of others is more refined, and adds more to the dignity of our nature, than that to be found in all the outrageous roars and vollied burſts of *laughter* at the folly of others; becauſe, upon reflection, that effect implies, perhaps, ſomewhat of a draw-back on humanity.

Might not a tacit feeling of this truth (altho' the cauſe then unknown) have influenced the antients to introduce, in a diſtinguiſhed manner,

nations, made representations from their religious worship, with a view, as they fancied, by purifying, and sublimating, enough to raise mortals nearer to the gods? — How false then is the long-current, notoriously received opinion, that the object of Tragedy is to purge the passions; whereas, on the contrary, and for the great benefit of social intercourse, it is to refine them where they are, and inoculate them in those savage bosoms where they are not.

Now, for Comedy, very little need be said here, in particular, of its origin, and effects, both being very obvious. — The former arose from the laughably ridiculous, and not legally punishable errors of individuals; the latter from the implied superiority which it gives us over them, and that proves so flattering to our pride.

As there are four classes of *Tragedy*, so there are four of *Comedy*.

1° *High Comedy*, wherein personages of the first rank may figure.

2° *Middling Comedy*, that is carried on among characters between high and low life.

3° *Low-Life Comedy* needs no prolix explanation, being confined to folks in menial occupations, the lowest of tradesmen, and servile people of whatever denomination. — A mixture of the three may be found in one piece, but must be managed with the greatest circumspection.

4° The *Buffoon*, or caricaturing Comedy, wherein is introduced the outré, the absurd, and extravagant grimacing of Nature's sentiments, and features, both striving for a superiority, to the no small entertainment of those vitiated, and uncultivated minds, that can be entertained with ribald exhibitions. — For such compositions and performances, the Italians are the most remarkable. — They

may, with justice, be called the *Tragedy* and *Comedy*, which might, with a closer application to what they are meant to signify, be called the *weeping* and the *laughing* drama, because springing (as hinted above) from the same congenial source, are to be conducted to perfection by pursuing a like method. —Wherefore, let us now press forwards on our investigation after the process of the human mind, in composing a theatrical piece, that thence we may be enabled to pronounce, Nature bearing the flambeau before us, and as directing our way, if the rules laid down by critics have any foundation in truth.

Yet, ere we enter upon this nice research, let us take the genuine spirit of the rules, from the directing instructions of a most celebrated Latin poet, and of a very eminent English painter, now uniting them in this concurring assistance under the words of the former,

Ut Pictura Poesis. HOR.

Painting and poetry mutually reflect a light on each other.

Quod verum atque decens, curo, et rogo et omnis in hoc sum.

Horace, as champion for the rules, declares, — My chief study is to discover, and communicate the truly beautiful of Nature, what the French call, *La belle Nature.* —

Now hear the English painter's best and most elegant illustration which hath been ever given, in any language of the above latin verse.

" But, whatever may be our proportion of success, of this we " may be sure, that the present institution will at least contribute " to advance our knowledge of the arts, and bring us nearer to " that ideal excellence, which it is the lot of genius always to

" contemplate

" contemplate, and never attain. Every opportunity ſhould " therefore be taken to diſcountenance that falſe and vulgar opinion, " that rules are the fetters of genius; they are ſcarers only to men " of no genius; as the armour which upon the ſtrong becomes an " ornament, and a defence, upon the weak and miſhapen turns " into a load, and cripples the body which it was made to " protect."

A Diſcourſe delivered at the Royal Academy, January 2, 1769, by the Preſident.

We are now to ſuppoſe the ſubject fixed on to be either hiſtorical or mythological, or taken up from the common occurrences of life, or the fortuitous produce of a fertile invention.

The firſt Poets, we may preſume, had it recited together, ungarbled and, ſurcharged with all its adjuncts. — But as, according to the vulgar ſaying, "There is no ſeeing the wood for trees," ſo the multifarious ſupernumerary, and for the moſt part expletive characters, as well as incidents, crowded, entangled, and perplexed matters to ſuch a degree, as that the whole appeared a jumble of confuſion and diſorder; which the human mind had neither enduring nor patience ſufficient to hear or ſee, in one continued, one uninterrupted exhibition.

Therefore Obſervation, under the name of judicious Criticiſm, [for Poems had been written long before any Rules were thought on] ſtept in to the aſſiſtance of DRAMATIC GENIUS; pointed to all the faults in the ordonnance of the piece; lopt off all excreſcential unneceſſaries from the chief buſineſs, whether unimportant circumſtances, frivolous details, idle narrations, events not fit to be ſeen, or contemptible perſons, that it might become the more eaſily obvious to an attentive audience, by the removal of ſuch clogs, and obſcuring lumber.

So

So far being obtained by the cool prescribing of reason, they acceded to the alliance (sacred Union which should never be broken) the refining power of Taste, that not satisfied with the *Esse*, the subject in its first rude state, turned all its efforts towards the *Posse*, that is, every beautifying amendment, alteration, or addition, that could be effectuated within the sweep of verisimilitude, probability, or even possibility; the Fable being duly modified, and the characters graphically preserved, without violently deviating from the originally conceived and given complexion of either.

What Genius invented, Reason arranged, and Taste gave a delicate finishing to the whole Drama. They, in conjunction, discovered, upon a further examination, that although it could be read altogether coolly in the closet, yet, when joined to the impressive power of action, it proved too much for the human mind and heart to take it all in at once; which therefore required duly distanced intervals of repose. Because the agitation of our passions we can bear but for a certain time, with any sensation of pleasure; beyond which it is tortured into that of pain.

The Drama then, or chief *Action*, they inferred to be, with propriety, dividable into *five Acts*, or minor businesses, leading to, and unweariedly co-operating for a final completion of the principal end; yet each in itself to be distinct, as so many links constituent of a chain: *Horace*'s rule for so doing, is to be oracularly relied on, as are indeed all his other precepts, relative to this subject, although he assigns no reason for them.

Ne-ve minor, nec sit quinto productior actu
Fabula, quæ posci vult, et spectata repeni.

"Let not your Drama consist of more, or of less *Acts*, than *Five*, "if you desire that it should enjoy the public's favour.

This

This odd number arises from a natural proceſs, diſcernible in moſt human affairs.

1° A beginning.

2° A progreſs.

3° A pitch, or climax.

4° A probationary teſt of contending intereſts, if matters are to continue in that ſtate, or not.

5° A deciſive termination either way.

Dramatic Genius cannot purſue a further proceſs, nor would the human attention ſubſcribe to it, — as had doubtleſs been evinced by experiment. —— However, ſhould a ſubject preſent itſelf, that might be made excellent in three acts, but would prove unnerved and weakly degenerate in five, then let it by no means be ſtrained from its genuine vigour; conſequently eked out to infirmity and diſgrace. —— But a Drama, equally good in five acts, will always have the preference, and raiſe its author to a higher degree of fame, than him whoſe pieces can reach but to three.

The number of ſcenes in an act is not abſolutely determined, but left to each judicious poet's diſcretion. The linking of ſcenes thro' an act, what the French call *La Liaiſon des Scenes*, without any ſhifting of the *Flats*, or *Drop-Curtains*, is well, where it can, with propriety, be obſerved; as it would be wrong to force matters, where it cannot.

A new Scene is cauſed by any perſon or perſons going off, or coming on the ſtage; which ſhould never be done without a very good reaſon for either. Others allow no change of Scene, but with that of Place; which is no material topic for a debate here, being mere matter of opinion, and that can no way affect the eſſen-

tial

tial merit of a masterly production. — The quantity of poetical lines for each Act, runs from two hundred and fifty, to four hundred.

The Fable, the Acts, and the Scenes being laid out, the next attention to be paid is to the Characters, that there be nothing written to make them speak, move, or act inconsistently with what you intend to usher them on for; which means, — Let the Style be suitably diversified for them, and have an appropriated *Keeping* in each; not be like that of some indiscriminating modern comedies, where, if the gentlemen were to be put into ladies attire, and the latter into that of the former, the dialogue would do equally well for Miss *Billy* or Master *Polly*; and Lady *Jack* or Lord *Fanny*.

We are now gradually led to *A candid Disquisition of the Rules laid down by Critics*; by which are chiefly meant, the three Unities of *Action*, *Time*, and *Place*.

Have these three long established, and long controverted articles been thoroughly understood in general, by those who have most zealously combatted for, or those who have attacked them with the greatest impetuosity of literary rage? — It is believed they have not, and that the following observations will make it appear.

1° *Unity*, (that is *Simplicity*) of Action, already in part made out above, is more easily impressed on, and retained by the minds of an audience: whereas the intricacy of a complicated dramatic fable, demands a more divided attention, to seize upon its warpings, and seeming deflections, in order to reclaim, and bring them home to the principal end — against which *Horace* declares,

Sit quod vis simplex duntaxat et unum.

2°. *Unity of Time*, that is, a *Continuity*, without any remarkable chasm; — because when we have once fixed an affectionate attention to a subject. we wish to lose sight of the subject but as little

as

as poſſible. We may remember that on reading romances in our younger days we always felt a regret at any obſervable ſeparation from the favourite object of our thoughts; and ſo zealouſly intereſted were we as to feel a ſtrong deſire of knowing all that might have befallen during an abſence ſo anxiouſly grudged.

The debates of the commentators on this ſubject are really laughable. One party allows twenty-four hours, which they call the *natural day*; the other confines to the time of our horizon's being cheared with the light of the *ſun*, and term it the *artificial day*.—According to the latter ridiculous doctrine, if a poet find himſelf ſtinted for want of time to bring about the buſineſs of his play with an air of probability, he may fix his plot on the longeſt day of *ſummer*, which will afford him a conſiderable advantage over the ſhorteſt in winter. In fine, let him give no more nor leſs time to a well digeſted drama than is neceſſary. If the real action might have been completed in the time of its repreſentation, why well: but if otherwiſe, let him not put either his mind or his piece to the rack for it.

3° *Unity of place* imports *contiguity*, and hath been entirely miſtaken by all thoſe who would indiſpenſibly confine it to a hall, a chamber, or any *one* unvariable ſituation; becauſe, by it, is more comprehenſively, as well as more juſtly meant a palace, a city, a camp, where all that is ſuppoſed to have been done off the ſtage, is to be made to ſquare with the length of the ſcenes carrying on, and the allowed interval of time between the acts, which is by no means to be ſtrained to an improbability.

In regard to the laſt *unity*, that of *place*, theſe words of *Horace* have been ſtrangely miſunderſtood by many

——*modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.*

for inſtance.—"In one act a ſcene the poet places me in *Thebes*, at *Athens* in another."—Yet the true meaning is, that the drama's buſineſs through one piece is carried on at *Thebes*, through another at *Athens*.—But the diſſentients from this opinion cry aloud, "cannot we imagine ourſelves, now at *Thebes*, and now at *Athens*? No doubt, by hurried and feverish efforts of the imagination we can; "*velut ægri ſomnia*," as it happens in a ſick man's dreams. But a ſound and thinking mind is abhorrent from ſuch a frequency of violent tranſitions, as muſt deſtroy the firſt adopted illuſion, and prevent its attention from fixing on a determined place.

Another obſervation of *Horace* hath been miſconceived by a gentleman of diſtinguiſhed genius and deſerved literary fame in *France*, *Monſieur Marmontel*, in his *Poetique Francoiſe*, T. 2. p. 95. *On demande, combien d'acteurs on peut faire dialoguer enſemble.* HORACE *dit* trois tout au plus; *mais rien n'empeche de paſſer ce nombre, pourvû qu'il n'y ait dans la ſcene ni confuſion ni longueur.*——"It has been aſked, How many perſons may be allowed to form a dialogue on the ſtage? *Horace* ſays, *three at the utmoſt*; but there is no reaſon why we may not exceed this number, ſo that the exceeding cauſe neither confuſion, nor prolixity."—Which, if a proper attention had been paid to the word, *laboret*, would be found exactly the meaning of *Horace*.

——————*Nec* quarta *loqui* perſona *laboret.*

"Let not a *fourth* perſon (conſequently more) be obtruſively for-
"ward to ſpeak without an abſolute neceſſity."

To theſe and all other precepts of old Rome's dramatic legiſlator, may, with the ſtricteſt juſtice, be applied a quotation from that excellent, rational, and accurate Engliſh poet, who hath revealed to us, as *Horace* had done to the Romans, the ſacred and uncontrovertible dictates of critical truth——

" Thoſe rules of old diſcover'd, not devis'd,
" Are nature ſtill, but nature methodiz'd."

POPE.

THE END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

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THE THIRD BOOK

EXHIBITS A

PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

OF THE

PRE-REQUISITES

TO SUCCEED IN

THE ART OF ACTING,

WHEREIN WILL BE SHEWN

Many eſſential Articles omitted by thoſe who have written upon that SUBJECT.

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DRAMATIC GENIUS.

BOOK III.

THE art of acting is a topic of almoſt univerſal converſation, yet how very few among playhouſe frequenters, or even thoſe who encumber the ſtage, know any thing of the matter?

To excel in this profeſſion is indeed a very arduous undertaking; and but little leſs on many occaſions, than to be a living and moving epitome of thoſe arts that rank foremoſt among the polite.

In the performer's countenance is to glow all the impaſſioned colouring for painters to copy after; while from his or her affecting attitudes, the ſculptors may derive new models for the improvement of their art. A pleaſing ſway of the limbs, and eaſy deportment of the body are to notify their having been tutored by the graces. Muſick muſt alſo appear to have taken a peculiar care in harmonizing thoſe accents that are to give new charms and force to all the beauties and energy of poetic diction.

This is what hath been done (therefore not to be held as an impoſſibility in nature) by the Grecian actor *Satyrus*, who reſcued *Demoſthenes* from deſpair, and to whom the world is obliged for that great

great orator, through virtue of his precepts and example. Nor have leſs wonders been performed by the Coryphæus of the Roman ſtage, *Roſcius*, whoſe acquaintance was courted, and even inſtruction ſolicited by a *Cicero*, the great luminary of Latin eloquence.

England can boaſt a theatrical ornament not inferior to either, but perhaps equal to both the Roman and Grecian; becauſe whatever *Satyrus* might have done by ſpeaking example in the point of oratorial execution for *Demoſthenes*; not leſs hath been done for young aſpirers to oratorial fame among us, in ſpeaking the jubilee ode to *Shakeſpear*'s commemorative praiſe. And whatever might have been *Roſcius*'s merit as an actor, I cannot be accuſed of adulation to think ours not only equal, but—nay I will venture the word without reſerve, ſuperior to him, when we conſider the manifold characters in which the latter ſhines by his own features, by his own natural tones, not artfully ſtrained utterance! Beſides how limited, maſked, and forced in theſe articles muſt the former have been?

But let Mr. *Garrick*, our cotemporary *Roſcius* and *Satyrus* in one, be left for the preſent to enjoy the publick's repeated admiration and applauſe, while I proſecute the analyſis propoſed for young people to try themſelves by, before they become declared candidates for mounting the theatre.

Although it hath been given but to a few, a very few indeed, to attain ſuch heights of excellence as the three above mentioned; there are, notwithſtanding, ſeveral ranks of repreſentative merit, in which eſteem, and a certain degree of fame may be acquired.

Let me be allowed to give an anſwer here to a queſtion frequently ſtarted—"What is the reaſon that among young petitioners for the "ſtage, they for the moſt part deſire to appear rather in tragic than in "comic characters?" It can be derived from the doctrine advanced in the

the preceding book. As they had felt more pleaſure in being made to *weep at a tragedy*, than to *laugh at a comedy*; ſo, conſequently it would prove more flattering to their pride, to excite the ſame effect in a crowd of ſpectators.

There is another article not unſeaſonable for animadverſion here, becauſe we often hear it previouſly boaſted as an aſſurance of ſucceſs in the behalf of young candidates—"Such an one is a very good ſcholar. He has had an univerſity education." But though that makes not againſt, it does but little for him; becauſe there are more eſſential pre-requiſites, without which that can be of no avail.

For as a dramatic poet may be a monſter of uglineſs, yet give proofs of an admirable genius; ſo the performer being much more of the inſtrumental than of the compoſing department, in general, ought to have a well-formed perſon, and a well-toned voice, ſince, *the art of acting conſiſts entirely in being ſeen and heard with pleaſure.*

Although learning cannot hurt, but rather aſſiſt; yet no more is to be inſiſted on as neceſſary than a tolerable ſhare of inſtruction at ſome of our reputable ſchools, or by private ſtudy under a judicious guide. An undeniable proof in ſupport of this aſſertion are the many celebrated actreſſes in this and all other countries, and ages, wherein dramatic exhibitions have flouriſhed.

The uſual method of a perſon applying to a critical friend, or ſome other deemed competent judge of theatrical matters, is to ſet off by declaiming a wrongly choſen ſpeech or ſcene, becauſe one in which ſome celebrated performer ſhines; and ought therefore to be avoided: ſince too frequently in ſuch attempts, there is more of the ape than of genuine talents to be diſcovered.

If writers find it a very rare thing to hit upon a duly qualified critic to reviſe and give them a candid opinion of their works; it is not leſs ſo to light upon an intelligent and taſteful guide to direct young candidates for adventuring on the ſtage: yet may daily be ſeen one or other impudent pretender, of whoſe utterance can be aſſerted, that there is nothing either pleaſing, eaſy, or flowing to be heard; it being buckramed with an offenſive ſtiffneſs, *Nil lene, nil placidum riget ejus oratio:* and on whoſe ungraceful countenance is engraved a legible prohibition from any interfering exemplary inſtruction in the ſcenic art; becauſe all copying of their tones, looks, &c. can be productive of nothing better than ſo many theatrical ſoleciſms. Let all ſuch horrours be avoided.—But when a truly valuable adviſer is luckily found, he will treat the perſons applying to him with politeneſs, will never call upon them immediately for a ſpecimen, conſcious that their ſpirits, ſeldom fail, on ſuch occaſions, of being thrown into an hurry and confuſion at the alarm of ſo ſudden an examination before the tribunal of judgment.

He will not, till after a few viſits and encouraging converſations, thereby to remove the firſt impreſſions of fear, propoſe any trial; but during the ſaid viſits and converſation, without ſeeming ſo to do, this obliging director will obſerve the intended pupil's ſhape, manner of moving, features of the face, and tones of the voice, &c. In all which, if there occur no remarkable exception, he will then proceed, according to what he has perceived his powers to be adapted for, to make choice of a part for him firſt to read, and after to ſtudy for ſpeaking, in order to ſet him right in both. He will gradually favour the ſtudent from time to time, not unmercifully cram him at once, as in a few meetings, with inſtructions proportioned to his faculties unfolding themſelves.

The analytical method concerning the pre-requiſites for *The art of acting* now comes under conſideration.

In

In the first place, we are to examine if the candidate stands upright and gracefully, if the forehead have a pleasing openness, if the brows be placed equal, well turned, formed alike, and move congenially; if the eyes be endowed with vivacity and expression; if the nose be in a just direction, and proportioned to the face; if the mouth be no way mishapen or distorted, nor too narrow, nor too wide; if the chin be neither too projectile nor too depress.

The countenance being so far examined, the next object of enquiry is, to see how its features are expressive of the passions, and of their transitions from one to another; which desirable effect is often incurably prevented by a layer of fat between the exteriour teguments and the muscles of the face; whence the more pathetic so unfortunate an actor attempts to be, the more laughable he becomes, from an apparent dissention between animated or mournful eyes, and a vacant phisiognomy.

What proves equally a blemish is, when the fibres of these muscles, though not covered by any intervening impediment, end short and abruptly, without a proper sweep tending to the line of beauty; because being so formed they produce a ridiculous appearance in efforts to express affliction and excite pity, nay often provoke a contrary effect, and the more so, the more pains are taken, inasmuch as the face looks like a piece of scratch-work, and that the eyes are in a manner thrust forward with an ideot glare.

The exteriourly constituent parts of the head being unexceptionable, or rather free from giving any offence to, or disappointing the spectators eye (absolute perfection is by no means insisted on in each article) the next survey of our analytic enquiry is to see if the head be put on well, which implies the neck's being duly proportioned, elegantly rounded, and rather *long* than *short*, because the latter is not a friend to the *graceful*.

The ſymetrical qualification of the breaſt, as well as of the upper and lower extremities, the one containing the ſhoulders, arms, and hands; the other the thighs, legs, and feet, with the body, is next to be enquired into; which, to complete a pleaſing ſtage figure, ought to be neither *fat* nor *lean*.

Let us now proceed to an examination of the two principal articles on which the ſucceſs of a theatrical performer chiefly depends, the *voice* and the *geſture*: beginning with the former.

The firſt requiſite of the voice is to be articulate, clear, and audible through the full extent of the audience, without any painful effort in the ſpeaker, becauſe that would occaſion a kindred effect in the hearer. To be heard ſimply is not the thing, but with pleaſure is the deſirable point.

Defects in this firſt poſtulatum are cauſed by a faulty formation, either of the mouth, the tongue, the throat, the breaſt, the lungs; therefore all who labour under a confirmed and invincible liſping, ſtuttering, drawling heſitation, ſmothering precipitancy, unintelligible thickening, diſagreeable creaking of the voice, &c. muſt renounce the ſtudy of theatric elocution.

However, in a well formed organization, a clear, although weak voice at firſt, may by frequent practice, and dint of continued application, if accompanied with a ſober and chaſte courſe of life, be made in time not only to pervade, but to convey itſelf not unpleaſingly to the remoteſt part of an audience; ſo the ſpeaker fail not in the article of breathing, whoſe imperfection, to a certain degree, is to be remedied by a due care, and ſtudious perſeverance in the means preſcribed.

One of the beſt cures for ſtrengthening a weak voice, and lengthening the breath, is every morning to frequently read and rehearſe aloud in private,

private, which moreover is a very ſalutary cuſtom, as it greatly contributes to expand the lungs, and cauſe by degrees a freer circulation of the blood.

Let the ambitious patient begin this vocal regimen with ſhort ſpeeches, or moderate paragraphs of an eaſy utterance; then proceed to others longer, and conſiſting of more difficult words: thoſe words which are felt by him to be the moſt impracticable he muſt conquer by degrees, ſyllable after ſyllable, then by joining a quarter, next a half, and finally let them all be pronounced in the aggregate, which will be the triumph of his induſtry.

In a like manner the reſiſting obſtinacy of particular letters is to be ſubdued, and forced to a due obedience by the dint of indefatigable application.

There are two faults of abſurd affectation in opening the mouth; the one too much, as if to bawl out every word; the other too little, as if to whiſper them only.

With judgment in theſe articles a middling, clear, piercing voice may be rendered more diſtinct to an audience than a louder, a fuller, and rounder; which indeed depends on an acquired and maſterly ſkilfulneſs in the mechaniſm and cunning of articulation, as well as in a knack of jockeying the breath.

Let a moſt ungraceful cuſtom of hawking, coughing, ſpitting and forcibly breathing be avoided as a peſtilent nuiſance would, becauſe where ſuch an offenſive noiſe and diſcharge are habitually prevalent, thence no elegance of pronunciation can be expected.

When a tongue is too large for the mouth; there being no chirurgical operation inſtituted as yet for paring down ſuch an excreſcential

error:

error to a proper ſize, it is to be looked upon as an abſolute diſqualification for becoming an actor.

There yet remains another article of analytic enquiry about the head, and that a very eſſential one, which is *the faculty of hearing*.

For without (according to the received expreſſion) *a good ear*, the fineſt toned voice in the world muſt by ever erring in a diſagreeable and haraſſing monotony, ſink its poſſeſſor, although endowed with every advantage of figure and complexion, to the low denomination of a bad actor.

Yet even this blemiſh might in part be removed, or at leaſt ſoftened by following advice that cannot be ſo intelligibly delivered in writing, as by converſation, and through a method not altogether diſſimilar from that of teaching dumb people to ſpeak, who are ſo in conſequence of a co-æval deafneſs, but not of their voices organization being vitiated.

So far is ſufficient for our readers to conceive what are the eſſential pre-requiſites for an actor's correct utterance. Let us now conſider him in another material point of view, and form an ocular analyſis of thoſe relative to his geſture. Since, as already hinted, to be *heard*, and *ſeen* with pleaſure, is the abridgment of his profeſſion. The taſteful ſpectators ears and eyes are in an uniſon with his tones and geſture; they are inſtinctively hurt by the leaſt failing of either.

As by *ſpeaking* we can convey our ſenſe to the blind; even ſo by geſture we can to *deaf* natives, and to foreigners who underſtand not our language, eſpecially on the ſtage. But for the effectuating of it ſtill further and with applauſe, let the following directions be obſerved.

The

The entire body is to bear firmly on the floor, and not to ſhift its place, or change its attitude every moment, which would incur the charge of an unballaſted reſtleſsneſs.

There muſt be a meaning of neceſſity, or of grace, for every diverſified direction of the head. It ſhould never be kept too ſtiffly erect (when not in character) which denotes an air of inſolence; nor let to ſupinely incline towards the breaſt, nor awkwardly lean towards either ſhoulder, which would exhibit a languid remiſsneſs.

The head of a performer, even when not ſpeaking, is neither to be immoveable, like that of a ſtatue, nor veering about to every blaſt like a weather cock; no, it is to enjoy an eaſy uprightneſs between motion and reſt without particularly marking either.

The countenance is always to be turned towards the ſpeaker, and from the eyes through an eſcaping look no conſciouſneſs is to be gathered of any ſpectators being preſent, even in ſoliloquies, which are but thinking aloud; *or in ſide ſpeaking.* They muſt ever accompany, with a ſocial direction the movement of the hands, when averſion is not expreſſed, and every movement of the hands is to have its appropriated meaning and indication, not applicable to any other.

Wherefore it follows that the direction of the eyes muſt always illuſtrate the ſenſe of the words. When heaven, the ſtars, ſun, moon, &c. of elevated ſituation are mentioned, or addreſſed to, they are to be turned upwards: but when earth, hell, &c. downwards.——Yet how often on our ſtage, to the ſhame of ſuch ignorant offenders, do we ſee this very obvious rule ſinned againſt, as well as a pointing their hands *from*, when ſpeaking *of* themſelves.

In ſwearing by any Deity's ſhrine, when in the temple that contains it; or appealing to the ſtatue of ſome revered perſonage in a public or other

other place, the eyes muſt be directed thither, the head, or hands tending that way.

The duty of the eye-brows is to be neither too ſluggiſhly quieſcent, nor too wantonly active; but to obſerve a free, eaſy, and well-timed obſequiouſneſs to the ſentimental expreſſion of the eyes, which may poetically be called the ſoul of the countenance.

Upon their judicious combination, well-managed direction, and co-impaſſioned energy depends the chiefeſt claim to excellence in *the art of acting*. As RICCOBONI, in his poem upon that ſubject, has diſplayed in a maſterly manner, and well worthy of a ſerious attention from every aſpiring performer.

Wherefore to his Italian text, that ſuch doctrine may not appear an affected inſinuation of mine, I ſhall annex a faithful tranſlation, to ſet forth that author's rule in the ſtrongeſt and the cleareſt light; whoſe evidence is to be the more relied on in this caſe, as he was both a good writer, and an actor not unknown to fame.

Oh! ſe agli occhi di tutte le perſone
Foſſe appicato un filo, e ſi portaſſe
Al punto ove lo ſguardo ſi diſpone?
Ai quai de' membri credi ſi attaceaſſe.
La gomena formata? ſolo al viſo
Ne altrove penſar gia che terminaſſe.
A tutti quanti gli auditori fiſo
Guarda negli occhi, e ogn'un di lor vedrai
Pender dà tuoi, quaſi d' amor conquiſo.
Trema di quegli ſguardi: ſe nol ſai
Aſpetta ogn'un di piangere al tuo pianto;
O come i tuoi farli ſereni, et gai.

Or

Or di, che non importa tanto, o quanto,
D' aver cura al tuo volto, ſe a lui dei
Interamente la vergogna, O il vanto.

"If from the eyes of every ſpectator a thread were to be drawn to that point, whither all their converging viſion tends, on what part of the body think you this optic chain would terminate? On the face alone. Now turn your eyes attentively on theirs, and you will obſerve them to be ſo fixed upon yours, as to thence expect a leading example whether they ſhall be overcaſt with ſorrow, or brightened into joy. Wherefore it is a matter of no ſmall importance to give your countenance a due direction, fitting to the ſcene; ſince from a carefulneſs of ſo doing you are to hope applauſe, or fear cenſure from a neglect."

According to this very ſenſible doctrine, how improper in our theatric ladies is all ſcreening of the eyes and countenance behind a fan, in order to take a ſly peep around the boxes, to deſery if any friends or admirers be there; and learn from their approving looks, if the dear creatures be enraptured with one's acting that night.

Another ſiſter-fault to this, which we may often perceive, is, an actreſſes looking into her boſom, and feeling there as for a roſe-bud that hurts her; although ſhe be ſpeaking at the ſame time. This is paying no great attention to the other performers; and as for the audience, the rays of her voice, pleaſed with a new direction, and charmed with the place, forget to reach their ears, being loſt in ſo lovely an abſorption!

If pronunciation ſuffer through the faulty organization, adventitious mutilation, or other incurred diſgrace of the noſe, that is a diſqualification; as are all deforming diſaſters of the face, ſuch as wens, large ugly moles, frightful ſcars, ſcrophulous tumours, &c.

Our analytical attention here regards only the pre-requiſites for that ſpecies of acting which is to repreſent the polished elegance, or elevated dignity of human nature; becauſe every departing widely from it either to the ſtupidly vacant, glaringly abſurd, deformed, or groteſque, needs but very little, or indeed no inſtructions: ſeeing that the enactors fit for ſuch parts come ready miſhapen, or unfiniſhed from the hands of nature, in the inattentive hours of her carelesneſs and negligence: ſince by a peculiarity in their make, an oafiſhly inane, or ridiculouſly marked face, with a ſingular tone of voice, they are the beſt adapted for theatrical productions which traffick in the deformity and turpitude of mankind. All ſuch actors' claim to their peculiar ſhare of the publick's notice, ariſeth, however paradoxical it may ſeem, from their imperfection.

A twiſting and ſcrewing of the mouth is to be avoided as a practice very unpleaſing; nor, is leſs ſo, a frequent licking, ſucking and biting of the lips.

To ſhrug up the ſhoulders often may do well in taking off a French outré character; but is elſe-where culpable. Thoſe actors who in ſpeaking are apt to raiſe one ſhoulder higher than another may be cured of this fault, by having a perſon near them in their private training to prick with a pin or needle the tranſgreſſive inſurgent.

Perſons inclined to ſtoop ought to make uſe of a collar with ſmall ſpikes on the fore part.

To throw the head back, and thruſt the belly forward in ſpeaking, is groteſque, unartful, indecent. An air of the laſt is betrayed by a conſtant ſticking of the left hand in a not very moral neighbourhood, beſides giving now and then a jerk or a pull-up to it, to enforce an unchaſte image.—For were the actreſſes to deprive themſelves alſo of the uſe of a hand, by faſtening it in the left pocket; what a pretty effect?

A proper

A proper and free command of the ſhoulders, arms, and hands, is to be acquired by an application to the art of fencing, as that of the thighs, legs, and feet is to be attained by the precepts of dancing. Through an unpardonable neglect of theſe auxiliaries, I have ſeen ſome, miſcalled players, who are capable of no other action with their hands, but that of catching flies, or imitating palſied fingers, or ſhort convulſive dartings of the hand, as in St. Vitus's dance.

Others I have ſeen ſo infirm about the ankles, as, like tender-hoofed horſes, not to be able to preſs with their feet ſignificantly upon the ſtage; wherefore upon ſuch weakly grounded, and tottering foundations no ſuperſtructure of dignity or grace can be erected.

Among the ancients, young tyros were a long time preparing, nay ſerved a kind of apprenticeſhip ere they adventured to exhibit themſelves. Quite the reverſe is practiſed among us, and hence ſo few ſucceed; but by crude and precipitate eſſays become objects of the publick's laughter.

The firſt reformer of *acting* into an *art* was the Grecian tragic poet *Æſchylus*, as we are told by *Horace* in a verſe that has not been rightly underſtood by the crowd of tranſlators and commentators;

" *Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique Cothurno:*

which, ſubſequent to the preceeding text for ſome lines, ſignifies, and can ſignify nothing elſe, but that *Æſchylus*

From ſcenes obſcure to fame his actors led,
Teaching with pow'r to ſpeak, with dignity to tread!

THE END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

A proper and free command of the shoulders, arms, and hands, is to be acquired by an application to the art of fencing, as that of the thighs, legs, and feet is to be attained by the steps of dancing. There are unpardonable neglects of these auxiliaries. I have seen some, reputable players, who are capable of no other action with their hands, but that of catching flies, or imitating pulled fingers, or their contemplating of the hand, as in St. Vitus's dance.

Others I have seen to intrude about the ankles, as if their tendons were horns, not to be able to perk with those feet significantly on the stage; wherefore upon such weakly grounded, and totter-ing foundations no superstructure of dignity or grace can be erected.

Among the ancients, young boys were a long time preparing, by several kinds of apprenticeships, and contrived to exhibit those arts. Quite the reverse is practised among us, and hence so few succeed; but by crude and precipitate essays become objects of the publick's displeasure.

THE FOURTH BOOK

DISPLAYS THE

CRITERIA

OF

DRAMATIC GENIUS:

FIRST, IN

COMPOSITION;

SECONDLY, IN THE TRUE

SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL

OF

ACTING.

ACTING.

OR

SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL

SECOND IN THE TRIP

COMPOSITION:

BEING AN

ORNAMENTIC GENIUS:

OR

BOOK IV.

CRITERION.

DRAMATIC GENIUS.

BOOK IV.

DRAMATIC genius in compoſition hath been aſſerted by many eminent writers to imply the utmoſt ſtretch of mental vigour, and that a good tragedy, both for energy and merit, ſurpaſſes all the claims of the epic muſe; becauſe in the department of the latter, ſhe frequently relaxes from the violence, ſtorm, and tempeſt of action into the milder, ſubſiding, and level calm of narrative: whereas the former is whirled on by a progreſſive, and ſtill encreaſing hurricane of intricacy, perplexities, and buſtle, to the prepared cataſtrophe: whence no room for any nodding remiſsneſs, or ſleep-inviting ſcenes is to be found, but in the works of tame, unqualified writers, who by no means deſerve to be liveried in the retinue of dramatic genius.

It will not be foreign from, but rather coincide with, the propoſed ſubject in this place to diſcriminate the two claſſes of men, who commonly undertake to write dramatic pieces, tragedies or comedies, whence may be eaſily inferred the reaſons of their different ſucceſs.

The one claſs is induced by an acquired, over-weening opinion in their own behalf from literature; the other is arrouzed thereto by an innate, and irreſiſtible impulſe from nature.

The

The former found their pretenſions on having had an univerſity-education—(by the ſame rule then all the diſtinguiſhed fellows of colleges ſhould be good dramatic bards)—that they have read all the ancient Greek and Latin theatrical productions, as well as the modern Italian, French, &c.—Granted.

But all this with the aid of much more voluminous learning will not avail without the unacquireable gift of genius; and, alas, there is no rule for that: which, but with a moderate ſhare of reading, and well directed ſtudy, will ſuffice to create all thoſe wonders, for which it is capacitated to give exiſtence.

———*Ego nec ſtudium ſine divite venâ*
Nec rude quid poſſit video ingenium; alterius ſic
Altera poſcit opem res, et conjurat amice,

HOR.

Imitated.

Study alone, where *genius* does not reign,
To write a *drama* makes but effort vain;
They muſt each other help the laurel to attain.

LILLO the tradeſman, had he been more happy in the choice of his ſubjects for the entertainment of high and faſhionable life, poſſeſſed more of the true tragic ſpirit,

Nam tragicum ſpirat ſatis, et feliciter audet—

HOR.

than any other author whoſe productions have been launched on the ſtage ſince the pathetic *Southern*'s days. Now when we mount from him to *Otway*, and top the climax with immortal *Shakeſpeare* have we any body elſe we can mention?

The

The ſober tragic playwrights from reading and ſcholarſhip only; give pieces of five acts that might begin or end any where; each not being moulded into a particular, ſubaltern, buſineſs, yet all co-operating to forward the completion of one grand deſign. No, their laſt act is as calm and unalarming as the firſt, and the firſt to the full as animated as the laſt, the whole flowing with an uniform tenor;

Correctly cold, and regularly dull.

Nay ſcarce do the unexpanding minds of ſuch congealed beings foreſee from one act, or even from one ſcene to another. While on the contrary the ſelect of Apollo

——————— *cui lecta potenter erit res.*

Hor.

having thoroughly impregnated his mind with the ſubject choſen, and all its adjuncts, with every circumſtance, real from nature, or ſubſtitutively annexable by art, of which he is become the abſolute maſter; paſſes the whole before his mind in one clear, diſtinguiſhing and comprehenſive review, laying in his firſt act, nay ſometimes in his very firſt ſcene, the prolific ſeeds from which all the miracles of thoſe to come, are to be engendered.

The plot being thus artfully contrived, and judiciouſly ſurveyed thro' every point, in order that what is gone before may be duly preparative of what is to follow, and that which is to follow, however unſurmized, and ſuſpenſive, may yet ſeem naturally to emane from what has preceded: He then betakes himſelf to the execution of his plan, which from having been previouſly well digeſted, is more than half done to his hand.

In the hour of compoſition he is not longer himſelf. Enthuſiaſm irradiates his glowing fancy, and operates an immediate tranſition of the poet into each character he draws. Hence by a kind of electric power he communicates his feeling to raptured audiences, that lounge with yawning jaws, almoſt to diſlocation, at the ſtuffing blank verſe work of mere literary poetaſters, (among whom I rank myſelf;

Primum ego me illorum dederim quibus eſſe poetas
Excerpam numero. HOR.

After ſo candid a declaration it is preſumed that no co-temporary delinquent can take any offence.) But he and he alone deſerves the denomination of *dramatic genius*, who

——*meum qui pectus inaniter angit,*
Irritat, mulcet, falſis terroribus implet,
Ut magus—— HOR.

Imitated.

Rending my breaſt with terrours not its own;
Can there raiſe tempeſts, or bring on a calm:
With magic pow'r commanding me at will.

There are others who ſin in a contrary extreme by being ever on the ſtretch after ſomething grand, which they cannot attain. In their works nothing elſe is to be found but pompous trifles, turgid declamation, or gigantic imagery, unknown to nature, rejected by art, and guiltleſs of every human paſſion.

Many perſons have been inconſiderate enough to aſk; and others equally unthinking have preſumed to anſwer, or rather to ſpecify what were likely to prove the beſt modelled plans, for a play, and to bid the faireſt for being honoured, not with a temporary, through friends

friends or faction, but a permanent applauſe through merit.—I humbly think it is that which ſtrikes a qualified author's fancy the moſt, eſpecially, when diſdaining that ſhameful maxim of ſervile, yet tyrannic pedantry,—" conſider how ſuch a great maſter would treat the ſubject,"—he ſtedfaſtly looks at nature with his own eyes; and boldly writes from his own feelings.

But ſuch wou'd-be dictators, and ſtilled only as one may ſay, in the carpentry of play-wrightſhip, concenter all their mechanical notions in diſcoveries, recognitions, and ſimilar ſprings, as in *Merope*, &c. which are the very worſt means, whereby a true poet can hope to obtain a laſting fame.

On the firſt night of their exhibition, or of being ſeen by an uninformed ſpectator, the effect is very agreeable, but ever after vaniſhes; becauſe fore-known.—Wherefore, thoſe intereſting dramas, which we can bear often-neſs to ſee, and with equal pleaſure, when equally well repreſented, will be owned upon enquiry to be ſuch, whoſe buſineſs we can in a manner forget, or remember but in the groſs: therefore may begin a new acquaintance with them, enter into a progreſſive intimacy, and feel an affectionate concern for their cataſtrophes at every repreſentation; as is the caſe in VENICE PRESERVED, whoſe ſpirited opening is ſuperiour to that of all the tragedies I have read, and ſhines forth a noble illuſtration of *Horace's*

——*ad eventum feſtinat; et in medias res*
Non ſecus ac notas auditorem rapit:——

OTWAY having his cataſtrophe full in view, ſets us adrift in the midſt of his intended dramatic voyage, ſuppoſing us to be thoroughly acquainted with the port, whence he had taken his departure, and every previous circumſtance.

Priul. No more! I'll hear no more; be gone, and leave me.

Jaff. Not hear me! by my ſuffering but you ſhall—
My Lord, my Lord! I am not that abject wretch
You think me—Patience! where's the diſtance thrown
Me back ſo far, but I may boldly ſpeak
In right, tho' proud oppreſſion will not hear me—

After a ſcene of vain remonſtrance to the cruel and hard-hearted *Priuli*, comes on the gallant and friendly *Pierre*, like a ſun to diſpel the incumbent cloud of anguiſh, and beam a chearing comfort over his drooping thoughts. Having worked on the injured *Jaffier*'s mind by a pictureſque and irritating narrative of *Belvidera*'s unhappy ſituation, to join in his deſign of reſcuing *Venice* from the ſenate's tyranny; he goes off the ſtage, the purpoſe he had come on for, being obtained. The author ſoon after the diſappearing of *Pierre* ſends on *Belvidera* to her huſband all diſtracted for her ſufferings, not his own; that the afflicted fair one's preſence might confirm and bring to maturity the reſolution *Pierre*'s converſation had newly grafted in his boſom.

b

There cannot be produced ſtronger *Criteria of Dramatic Genius in Compoſition*, than in this act; and indeed throughout the ſubſequent of this piece, according to the preſent corrected form of repreſenting it; of which, as well as of the principal ſtock-plays, for the uſe of foreigners, it is to be wiſhed there were exact printed copies to follow the performers, in order to attain our Engliſh accent in a purer manner than they can from common language-maſters.

But let us return to *Venice preſerved*; the firſt act conveys a ſufficient knowledge of the principal characters, as well as an inſight of the buſineſs likely to follow. The ſecond proceeds to a furthering of the plot; where the giving of *Belvidera* by *Jaffier* as a pledge of his ſince-

rity.

ſity and zeal in the cauſe of the conſpirators, is a maſter-ſtroke of art bearing in it the ſeeds of that change which was to be wrought in him afterwards. The third act riſes to a climax of provoking *Jaffier* to a deſertion from his engagement on one hand; and of the *Venetian* ſenate being deſtroyed on the other; but we are left uncertain which will be the event.—In the fourth act, that is to contain the ſtruggle, or criſis of contending intereſts; as between *Jaffier*'s affronted love in *Belvidera*, and the covenanted ruin of *Venice*: Fate decides, by defeating the latter.—Let all who have hearts to feel, and eyes to weep recount the merit of the two laſt ſcenes. The fifth act exhibits a moſt affecting cataſtrophe.

Be it moreover obſerved, that a combination of the four claſſes of tragic effect appears in this performance: 1° Of the *admirable* in *Pierre*, whoſe characteriſtics are generoſity, patriotiſm, friendſhip, and intrepidity. 2° Of the *pitiable* in the diſtreſs of *Jaffier* and *Belvidera*. 3° Of the *terrible* in the mercileſs reſolution of the conſpirators in the third act.

" Then fire the city round in ſev'ral places,
" Or with our cannon, if it dare reſiſt,
" Batter't it to ruin—but above all I charge you
" Shed blood enough, ſpare neither ſex nor age,
" Name nor condition, &c."

4° Of the *horrible* in *Jaffier*'s painting the imagined execution of his friend *Pierre*,

" Hark how he groans! his ſcreams are in my ears!
" See, ſee, they've fix'd him on the wheel,
" And now they tear him, &c."

in the attempts to ſtab his beloved *Belvidera*; and finally in fulfilling the promiſe of ſtabbing his friend *Pierre*—then himſelf.

In

In order to make young minds better acquainted with what truly conſtitutes *the Criteria of Dramatic genius* in compoſition, through a more effectual way than can be done by precept. Let them begin by reading in the French original, or a tranſlation, *L'Abbe de St. Real's* hiſtory of the conſpiracy againſt the ſtate of *Venice*. Next let them read *Otway's* play as he firſt gave it to the ſtage, then animadvert on the uſe he has made of the tranſactions and characters therein contained, as well as on what of either he may have added from his own invention, and the ſince made improvements in this excellent ſtage-entertainment; firſt, by an omiſſion of the comic or rather abſurd part: ſecondly, by baniſhing the appearance of *Pierre* and *Jaffier's* ghoſts, which are but the ideal progeny of *Belvidera's* diſordered imagination.

Now for this continued alteration, as well as for the equally judicious one of the *Fatal Marriage*, ſince called *Iſabella*, the public is indebted to Mr. *Garrick*, who in ſo doing has acted agreeable to the rules of dramatic compoſition; within whoſe hoſpitable ſhelter comes every beauty of *Shakeſpeare*, and only his exceptionable parts are to be looked upon as irregular.

The following anſwer I gave to a French gentleman's remark, as we were walking in the gardens of *Verſailles*—"Is it not ſurpriſing that ſo ſenſible a people as the *Engliſh* can be pleaſed with *Shakeſpeare's* abſurdities."—"The *Engliſh*, ſir, are not pleaſed with *Shakeſpeare's* abſurdities but bear with them (which they very well know before any ſtrangers had attempted a diſcovery of) on account of his excellencies, which every thing conſidered, the æra he lived in, his narrow education, early marriage, deer-ſtealing frolicks, &c. are really miraculous."

But it were needleſs here to undertake the defence of that Olympian *Jove* in dramatic writing, who has been ſo victoriouſly defended by our Engliſh PALLAS* againſt the vain and impious attempts of French giants

* An Eſſay on the Writings and Genius of SHAKESPEARE.

giants in criticism, ENCELADUS VOLTAIRE at their head; proving from his works

Unde nil majus generatur ipso,
Nec viget quicquam simile, aut secundum:
Proximus ille tamen occupavit
PALLAS HONORES. HOR.

Imitated.

Than him no greater bard was ever born;
None equal sang, or next in rank is nam'd;
Yet second honours let her brows adorn
Who in his cause will live for ever fam'd.

Shakespeare shines first on the list of our *tragic* writers, and is the foremost on that of our *comic*; for as to him nature gave all the power she could: so art gave to *Ben. Johnson* every resource.—Therefore they are recommended as the best models to study; in the most regular of *Shakespeare*'s comedies, *The merry wives of Windsor*; with the *Silent Woman*, *The Alchymist*, and *The Fox*, by the second father of our stage: nor must his adopted son *Randolph*'s excellent production, for so young a man, called the *Muse's looking glass*, be forgotten.

The rest of our comic writers, who are not deficient but rather abound in the articles of learning, wit, humour, and spirited dialogue, had they not sinned so much against decency, might be esteemed as proper objects of study; may be looked over promiscuously; or read cursorily, according to the dates of their successive appearance, if such a process to the studious reader may seem most pleasing.

It is to be observed that in the planning of their fables they are fond of deviating from Horace's *simplex*, to the *complex*, and even the *perplex*: CONGREVE particularly,

One;

One argument may ſuffice for the eternal extirpation of that heterogeneous monſter *Tragi-Comedy* from our ſtage; which is, nature's repugnance to all ſudden tranſitions from one extreme to another. Nothing is more offenſive to ſorrow, in whoſe undiſturbed enjoyment there is a ſecret pleaſure, than impertinent intruſions of mirth: and to brilliant aſſemblies of mirth nothing proves more unwelcome, than cloudy and overcaſting approaches of ſorrow. For not only while at a diſtance, but even when nearly ſituated, they abhor being ſeen together; as may be inferred from the example of a family weeping in one apartment of the houſe, for the loſs of a parent, child, &c: the unaffected ſervants, &c. laughing and enjoying themſelves in another.

A modern kind of epicene dramatic textures, which are called *ſentimental*, fall under the unwarrantable definition of grave comedies, or merry tragedies, for neither *Melpomene* nor *Thalia* will acknowledge them; conſequently aſſign their authors over to *Novel-writing*, becauſe in that province they may derive conſiderable advantages from the auxiliary ſubſidies of narrative. But

——————mediocribus eſſe poetis
Non di, non homines, non conceſſere columnæ.

Imitated.

Tame mediocrity in dramas now
Let boxes, pit, nor galleries allow.

It is time to enter upon the ſecond part of my promiſe in this book; *The true ſublime and beautiful of acting:* which to attain, an actor free from the organical impediments recited in the preceding book, ſtands in need but of one requiſite more, and that is *ſenſibility* or *feeling*, which, like genius to an author, muſt be given by nature. They are both improveable by ſtudy, and art, but not acquirable.

The

The expreſſions [illegible] purpoſely employed here, in oppoſition to inſtinctions grand and ſpecimen of the *falſe beautiful* and *falſe ſublime* of acting, in Miſcellanies, formerly publiſhed by me, and of whoſe [illegible] to refer at the end of this work.

Between the performing of the ancients and that of the moderns, on account of the *maſks* and many other concomitant appendages to the perſonated exhibitions of the former, beſides the vaſtneſs of their theatres, &c. no kind of compariſon can be inſtituted, wherefore it is a ſubject I ſhall not meddle with here, being quite foreign from my preſent deſign.

The maſks however had one advantage unknown to us, which was when a daughter, a ſon, a miſtreſs, &c. had a mind to carry on a deception in regard to a father, or a lover, by paſſing for another perſon; and indeed it was much better done by that aſſiſtance becauſe the face could be altered to whatever aſſumed form they pleaſed for the better ſucceeding in ſuch an impoſition; whereas all expedients of that kind, as practiſed on our ſtage, are very awkward, nay improbable.

But this diſadvantage is infinitely over-balanced by our ſeeing, on every other occaſion, all the impaſſioned viciſſitudes of the human countenance, as well as by hearing the unforced, and genuine accents of every affection; whoſe accurate and happy expreſſion, in *comedy* conſtitutes the true *beautiful*, and in *tragedy* the true *ſublime* of acting. Of which, two lately deceaſed actreſſes were poſſeſſed in an eminent degree, namely, Mrs. *Pritchard*, and Mrs. *Cibber*, as muſt be acknowledged by all thoſe who have ſeen the former in *Beatrice*, *Roſalind*, *Clariſſa*, &c. and the latter in *Juliet*, *Alicia*, *Conſtance*, &c.

The *characteriſtics* of their reſpective departments were emphatically diſplayed by both; *laughter* by Mrs. *Pritchard*, *ſorrow* by Mrs. *Cibber*:

and in a very ſtriking contraſt to many [illegible], the exceſſive laughter of the one party being not only lamentable, but horrible; while the other burleſques calamity with a ridiculouſly woeful aſpect.—And pronunciation is diſgraced by dry ſtopping intervals from word to word.

On Mrs. *Pritchard*'s open and pleaſing countenance, ſimplicity, meaning, and cheerfulneſs ever accompanied her well-timed, and well-toned laughs.

Mrs. *Cibber*'s pathetic features and intereſting accents gave grace to ſorrow, and majeſty to affliction.

Mrs. *Pritchard*'s voice ſtruck out all the ſprightly, clear, diſtinct, yet connective, and animated notes of a *fiddle*. From Mrs. *Cibber*'s flowed all the ſoothing tones, delicate inflexions, tender tranſitions and aſſuaſive melody of the *flute*.

Theſe two were actreſſes, and both at times have given ſhining proofs of their great ſkilfulneſs in what may be called *adluſion* (to diſtinguiſh it from the word *alluſion*) the art of playing to the hearer, with properly varied looks, geſtures, ſhrinks, alarms, ſighs, traverſing the ſtage, turning to, and from, &c. which is now ſo frequently neglected by the greater part of our performers: yet furniſhes ſuch brilliant opportunities of the true *ſublime* and true *beautiful* in acting, which the ancients had not, by reaſon of their maſks.

For a more extenſive knowledge of the *ſublime* and *beautiful* in general, whether in the circle of the polite or even uſeful arts, and various ranges of nature, all curious enquirers are referred to that gentleman's *eſſay*, who is now divorced from the muſes, a not inconſiderable loſs to the *Belles-Lettres*-world, and doomed to the ſenatorial drudgery

drudgery of unharmonious altercation: of whose elegant performance may be truly said,

What genius dictates, and learn'd taste indites
Proves the *sublime* and *beautiful* he writes.

Left what is above advanced might induce my readers to think I exclusively appropriate the *true beautiful* in acting to *comedy*, and the *true sublime* to *tragedy*; I declare my opinion is, that reciprocally each may at times appear in the other, and with the strictest propriety, but that they both have their peculiar predilections.

However, the general criteria of the *truly beautiful* of acting in *comedy*, as well as of the *truly sublime* of acting in *tragedy*, consists in the performers appearing to be the very characters they represent; uttering their dialogue, whether calm or impassioned, with a voice judiciously varied into tones (with sometimes happy dissonances) and accents so suitable, as to be exclusive of all others on that occasion; accompanied too with looks, as well as gestures peculiarly adapted; agreeable to *Cicero's* doctrine, which that great master, as well as foremost example of oratorial elocution, in every sense of the word, had acquired from the best of all schools, an accurate observation of nature: *Omnis enim motus animi suum quendam à naturâ habet vultum, et sonum, et gestum.*—Lib. 3. De Oratore.

Were this truth properly attended to by our stage-practitioners, we should never see nor hear the now common errour of *tragic* gestures, and declamation in the irritable scenes of *comedy*; which ought to be carefully avoided by every person that would desire to be thought possest of the *true beautiful* of acting in *comedy*, and not be deemed at the same time totally ignorant of the *true sublime* in the acting of *tragedy*, by straying into the *false*, with a barbarous stare of features, inhuman roaring, and a most tyrannical vibration of limbs. There is a quality

and temperament to be observed in the paſſions of the great, and the polite, who muſt by no means be made to rage like Bedlamites.

Now the reaſon of the epithet *beautiful* being applied to the *comic* department is, becauſe a gallantry of dreſs, an eaſy livelineſs of deportment, a fluently ſpirited manner of converſing, heightened by various occurring, concomitant, or incidental graces, &c. are diſplayed there: all which minor excellencies (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) can have little or no room in; nay rather are abſolutely excluded from the *tragic*: where through the gravity of the buſineſs, the ſolemnity of the ſcene, and elevation of the chief perſonages in general, a commanding aſpect, a dignity of geſture, and a majeſty of ſpeaking are required.——Here *Quinctilian*'s remark comes in very pat, Roſcius *citatior, Æſopus gravior fuit, quod ille Tragœdiæ, ille Comœdiæ egit.* Roſcius was more lively in his manner, Æſop more grave; and for this reaſon the latter acted in *tragedies*, the former in *comedies*: which uncontrovertibly implies, according to that excellent critic's meaning; that the one was poſſeſt of the *true beautiful*, and the other of the *true ſublime* in acting.

A combination of theſe grand theatric eſſentials are to be ſtudied by actors, and admired by ſpectators in that protean performer, who is occaſionally the thunder-bearing eagle of *tragedy*, in LEAR, MACBETH, HAMLET, &c; the pleaſing ſwan of ſpirited and genteel *comedy* in BENEDICT, DON FELIX, RANGER, &c: the neſtling, humble, and contracted wren of *low-life* in ABEL DRUGGER!

How has he arrived to this degree of perfection? by adding to all the advantages with which nature has copiouſly gifted him, an indefatigable application to reading, practicing, and converſing with many learned and ingenious perſons of this and other nations; as well as with the moſt eminent artiſts in their ſeveral departments, whom he could

derive

derive any hint or inſtruction from.—The unſtudious, the idle, or the diſſipated will never be conſpicuous in the profeſſion of acting.

Of all the living performers, except him univerſally allowed to be above the reach of competition, I had reſolved not to take notice, to avoid cauſing animoſity and jealouſies among themſelves, as well as any charge of partiality againſt myſelf in the behalf of particulars; therefore I leave them to the deciſion of the public, chuſing by no means to point out faults for the entertainment of malignancy, and candidly own at the ſame time that ſeveral are endowed with a great ſhare of merit, and others with proper talents for a ſtill farther improvement than either giddineſs, indolence, or vanity flattered have yet ſuffered them to attain.

But as to blazon forth the various merits of our now theatric Phœnix, would require a larger volume than this, my unfeigned ſentiments thereof cannot be conveyed either in a juſter or ſtronger light, than in the ſhort Latin poem, occaſioned by the alarm of his being dangerouſly ill in March 1769, to which is added an Engliſh imitative paraphraſe, for the accommodation of thoſe who might not underſtand the original; and of which, at the time, ſeveral printed copies were handed about, as a *palinodia* for myſelf and others having been ſeduced into tenets of dramatic hereſy.

CAR-

CARMINA

IN NUPER

ÆGROTANTEM

NUNC VERO

CONVALESCENTEM

THEATRI BRITANNICI

CORYPHÆUM.

ROSCIUS Anglorum lecto defixus, ad alta
Aſtra, reverſanti, revoluto ſydere, terrâ,
Heu meditatur iter; vidui ſi dramatis heros
Flebilis occiderit; quiſnam tua regna *Thalia*
Suſtineat ſolus: *tragicique* negotia muſæ?

Æmulus aſſurgat, tali qui numine, et artis,
Naturæque, poteſt varios proferre colores——
Hic tantum in votis, nullo mirabilis ævo.

Illicò diffugiant lachrymæ, ſuſpiria, luctus.
Præteriere ferox aurigo, et ſæva nephritis.
Jam rubicunda ſalus faciem depingit; ocellos
Tam cari capitis læto ſuffundit honore.

Quare agite, juvenes, blando ſimul agmine nymphæ
Accedant, placidis licet indulgere choræis——

Muſa

VERSES

ON THE LATE

SICKNESS AND RECOVERY

OF THE

BRITISH THEATRE'S GREATEST ORNAMENT:

Being an IMITATIVE PARAPHRASE of the Latin.

ALBION's fam'd *Roſcius*, on ſick-bed confin'd,
To heav'n ſlightly meditates the way.

What muſt have been the widow'd *Thalia*'s lot:
Were he, the ſtage's *Corypheus* gone?
Who'd then alone the *tragic* ſceptre wield,
And reign unrivall'd in the *comic* ſcene?

Let envy name who equal cou'd diſplay
Both art and nature's executive force;
And various col'ring of their pow'rs combin'd—
That's to be wiſh'd; ne'er was: perhaps, ſhall ne'er be ſeen.

Hence idle tears, vain ſighs, and pining grief;—
The jaundice dire, th' excruciating ſtone
Torment no more—Lo, bloomy-viſag'd Health
Pencils a new vermillion o'er his face,

Returns

Muſa parens risûs, venereſque; jocique, leporeſque
[illegible]
Nunc opus—Illa necis crudelia tela, venenique
Auxilium fugiens; alienos ſumere vultus
Lætitiæ gaudens, ſolitas aſſueta querelas.

En, chorus omnis adeſt, redivivo munera portans,
Phœbigenum; et feſtis laté loca cantibus implet!

Martis Id. 1769.

Relumes the native radiance of his eye
With grace ſuffuſive, and heart-gladd'ning ſway.

Now let the youth of either ſex rejoice,
Now is the time to form the feſtive dance.

Thalia haſtes with all her blitheſome train
Of ſmiles, of joys, of laughter, and of loves,
To hail their fav'rite, reſcu'd from the foe
Of nature, genius, elegance, and taſte.

With kind inviting ſhe her ſiſter woos
To interrupt habitual ſorrow's flow,
And be a ſharer in the gen'ral joy.

Melpomene aſſents; the murd'ring ſword
Lays by: and turning from the poiſon'd cup
Beholds with all a mother's glowing fondneſs
A darling ſon reſtor'd to life, and her.
Thoſe eyes long us'd to weep; now learn to ſmile.
A foreign luſtre gilds her faded cheeks,
Like tranſient glories o'er a clouded ſky.

Behold th' ingenious of all arts attend;
With zeal their warm congratulations pour!

Hence nought is heard but rapture all around,
And echo joys to replicate the ſound.

March 1769.

THE END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

THE FIFTH BOOK

TREATS OF

ARCHITECTURE,

PAINTING,

AND

OTHER ARTS:

SO FAR AS THEY ARE ACCESSARY TO

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION.

THE FIFTH BOOK

OF

DRAMATIC GENIUS.

TREATS OF

ARCHITECTURE,

PAINTING,

AND

OTHER ARTS;

SO FAR AS THEY ARE ACCESSARY TO

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION.

DRAMATIC GENIUS.

BOOK V.

THE Reaſon for beginning this book with the article of architecture, ariſes not from an intention of entering into any diſcuſſive examination of that *art*; becauſe, conſidered as ſuch, ſo little or rather nothing of it is employed in our London theatres, or other throughout the Britiſh dominions.

Meerly as edifices they are no objects of curioſity, either for exteriour, or internal beauties to be ſeen in the hull of each fabrick, where ſcarce any more ſigns of elegance, or magnificence can be deſcried than what bricklayers, carpenters, and tylers are able to execute; the primary and ſole intent having been to cover a ſpace ſufficient for the ſeveral ranks of ſociety to be conveniently ſeated, in order to view the performances exhibited on the ſtage, for which a proper area is allotted.

The chief motive for mentioning that art here, is to animadvert on what *Virgil* ſays in the firſt book of his Æneid, which comes in as a ſtrong auxiliary to the hypotheſis advanced in the ſecond book of this work—and is where he makes *Æneas* obſerve among the moſt ſtriking objects worthy of his attention in the but newly founded *Carthage*

hic

——————————hic alta theatris
Fundamenta locant alii, immaneſque columnas
Rupibus excidunt, ſcenis decora alta futuris.

" Here deep foundations are laid by ſome for ſplendid theatres; there " proud aſpiring columns hewed out of rocks, to join in decoration " for the future ſcenes."—

So neceſſary did this great poet think theatrical inſtitutions for the characteriſtic of an humane and poliſhed people; becauſe wherever they are encouraged the liberal arts are not aliens, but indenizen'd,

——ingenuas didiciſſe fideliter artes
Emollit mores, nec ſinit eſſe feros:

OVID.

" which to have learned gives a poliſh to our manners, and reſcues " from a ſtate of barbariſm.

The only opportunity a virtuoſo in architecture has of ſhewing judgment at our theatres of Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden, is in the department of ſcene-painting, in which article they are as luxurioufly rich, as almoſt nakedly poor in the other: and the managers therefore juſtly deſerve the publick's encouragement as they ſpare no expence to have the beſt artiſts.

Architecture, or in its place with us, common building, provides ſeats for the ſpectators; and Painting, with duly decorated ſcenery, prepares the ſtage for the actors delivering their drama, according to the ſituation of place, and rank of life in which every repreſented character is ſuppoſed to have been.

So

So much being premiſed, now a matter of ſerious debate preſents itſelf. In what ſtyle ought the language of a drama to be; whether in that of common converſation; or one more ſtudied, and conſequently more polite?

The beſt ſolution of this matter will be eaſily deduced from a ſuccinct, yet ſatisfactory diſplay, of the original cauſe which gave birth to, and of that ſpirit which is ever to prevail in, and direct a cultivation of, the liberal arts; the hereditary and indefeaſible empire of fanciful invention; which may generically be called the poetical or creative power in each: and that being explained in any one, is immediately applicable to all, as the common actuating principle.

Wherefore from the received notion of poetry having been the firſt cultivated, and the eldeſt ſiſter in conſequence, we make a choice of her; founding our doctrine on that poetical text, which contains in a few words the philoſophical tendency of the polite arts.

——————*Poeta cum fabulas cepit ſibi;*
Quærit quod nuſquam eſt gentium: repperit tamen.

"When the poet ſits down to compoſe, he ſends his imagination "abroad in queſt of what, ſtrictly ſpeaking, is to be ſeen no where, "yet finds it notwithſtanding."

The beſt elucidation of this ſeeming paradox, yet fundamental baſis of the civilizing arts, is to be taken from the judicious conduct of *Zeuxis* the Grecian painter, who when he had reſolved on executing the picture of a perfect beauty; did not paint this or that particular lady celebrated for her charms: no, he brought together, combined in his mind, and finally co-identified into one, the ſeveral excellencies of the many living belles whom he had ſeen, joined to all the concomitant heightenings his taſteful fancy could with propriety ſuggeſt; then

to

to the whole of ſo charming a deſign, the animated poetry of his colouring gave real and wonderful exiſtence.

When *Shakeſpeare*, the greateſt dramatic genius of England and of nature, reſolved to draw the prince, the hero of laughable abſurdity, in Sir *John Falſtaff*, he could not have met, in his time, an original prototype to copy ſuch an extraordinary character from, becauſe none ſuch had ever exiſted. It was not from this, or that, or a third ridiculous fellow which he might have taken cognizance of, that he gave us, in him, according to the juſt expreſſion of Mr. *Garrick's* ode,

A comic world in one.

No, he crowded together the ſcattered demerits of all ſuch unworthy treſpaſſers againſt integrity, truth, honour, &c. as he might have ſeen, his own fertile invention contributing largely to the ridiculous groupe.

The eminent muſical compoſer brings together, and binds up in laſting confederacy, an harmonious ſucceſſion of ſounds, which tho' they are all to be found in nature, were never heard in that poetical order till ſubdued by the diſcipline of his art.—The ſame doctrine reaches to ſinging, dancing, ſculpture, &c.

Now in dramatic compoſitions, tragedies eſpecially, the painted ſentiments of the mind, and feelings of the heart, require to be accompanied with a muſical expreſſion, and if in rhime, ſuch as the impaſſioned parts of POPE's *Eloiſa's* letter to *Abelard*, where would the hurt be?

Rhime, will cry out ſome ſhallow-read objector, is a modern and gothic invention—not it indeed, but was conſtantly practiced by the Greek and Latin poets; for as we finiſh our verſes with a *likeneſs of ſound*, ſo did they with a *likeneſs of meaſure*: as for inſtance, in their hexameters;

hexameters, which generally conclude with a dactyle and ſpondee; where there is no particular motive of poetical licence, or particularly affected expreſſion for the contrary, or varying their caſura, or pauſe, (as we do in our Engliſh verſification) of which in the Latin inſcription for *Shakeſpeare's* temple, there are ſome founded on the beſt claſſical precedents.

Nos patriæ fines, et dulcia ——— linquimus arva
Nos patriam fugimus, tu tityre ——— lentus in umbra
Formoſam reſonare doces amar ——— yllida ſilvas

Imitated.

We fly our native clime, paternal ſeats,
And of youth's happier joys the kind retreats.
You Tityrus at eaſe, each liſt'ning grove
Reſounds fair *Amaryllis* and your love.

Of Latin rhimed or conſonant endings, an affected writer was ſo profuſely vain, as for every copy of verſes, to have a *terminating relay* to the ſame ſenſe in readineſs, if required, in order to lead each word-catching ſnarler in criticiſm a back dance from the laſt line to the firſt, as ſuppoſe for example-ſake in the concluſive inſcription for SHAKESPEARE's temple,

Lu ——— *dibria præbet*,
——— *Stemmate dives*,
——— *Præmia naxæ*, &c.

But that fantaſtic innovation, implying more of labour and difficulty, than of genius and taſte, was ſoon laughed into contempt and diſuſe.

Poetical licence in Latin verſification, is the tranſgreſſing againſt ſome eſtabliſhed rule, wherein a beauty is diſcernible that could not be otherwiſe, ſuch as giving long or ſhort meaſures to ſyllables naturally the reverſe, &c. In Engliſh it is either compreſſing ſyllables together, or looſening them into a greater flow, and ſometimes in the additional lengthening of a verſe or verſes, the better to expreſs the ſenſe; which is excuſable when ſoberly employed, but blameable when wantonly indulged; but indeed our Engliſh proſody and art of verſification are far from a ſtate of perfection.

I mean not here to contend for a revival of *rhime* throughout any of our dramatic performances; but only to hint that they never ſuffered in conſequence, but through writers who either were not maſters of, or too ſupinely neglected that part of the poetical art, as may be proved by *Racine*'s tragedies, *Moliere*'s ſelect comedies, ſeveral of *Voltaire*'s ſtage-pieces, which for the moſt part are ſtretched into tameneſs, or blown up into bombaſt, and otherwiſe horribly diſfigured by the generality of our taſteleſs, inelegant, and wretched tranſlators. But ſince blank verſe, on a ſuppoſed ſimilarity to the *Iambic* of the ancients, is adopted for tragedies, be it ſo, and ever inſiſted on, to keep clear of very proſe, in that department of the drama at leaſt.

There ought alſo to be a ſcene of *effect* to conclude each act (which ought never to exceed a certain length of time) and to it all the preceding ones ſhould aſcend as to a climax.

There is no abſolute neceſſity for *death* in a *tragedy*, nor for marriage in a *comedy*, ſo far as to violate the truth of a known tranſaction—for indeed a diſplay of the paſſions ſpecificated to each department is all that is abſolutely neceſſary.

The

The occaſional intermixture of poetical or rhimed lines with proſe, is authorized among the ancient claſſics by the elegant *Petronius*, among the moderns by *Rochemont*, *la Chapelle*, and others.

If an author, having written up to the general title of a work propoſed, as well as of each book, chapter, or ſection in particular, indulge himſelf now and then in metrical expreſſions, in order to add more of the entertaining and the graceful to his production; deſerves he not rather approbation than cenſure for ſuch attempts at poetic ornament, either in rhime or blank verſe, as they temptingly occur, for giving a more pleaſing cloſe to his ſentiment.

The untagging of tragedies lately, on account of many forced compariſons formerly uſed by way of tail-pieces for the old plays, makes the acts in general to end very baldly; and equally unartful is the cuſtom of ſending principal characters, after they had figured greatly in a ſcene, off the ſtage with an inanimate half-line, ſometimes not a word; which inattention of the author makes them waddle off like ſo many theatrical lame ducks, depriving at the ſame time the audience of an opportunity to pay them, at their exit, that tributary applauſe which they had deſerved.

But is it in the courſe of common nature for people to ſpeak in rhime? no; nor in blank verſe, nor even in elegantly rounded and well-cadenced proſe; but with common nature the polite arts have nothing to do; ſhe being provifionally, induſtriouſly, and drudgingly married to their very diſtant relations the neceſſary arts of life.

To explain this matter farther by ſtage-repreſentation.—Let us ſuppoſe a tyrant (which may very probably happen in the courſe of common nature) were poſſeſt of a moſt amiable form, enchanting tone of voice, accompanied with a moſt pleaſing addreſs; but his ſon, a young

prince, and a lover, disgraced with an horrid discordancy of features, a gratingly offensive utterance, an awkwardly shocking demeanour; should we be pleased with the sight of an exact resemblance in every point? No.—Because our judgment would immediately revolt and cry aloud within us, that things ought not to have been so.

Here is an instance of *absolute truth*'s losing its *quantum* of credibility, and of *poetical versimilitude*'s rightful demand to a preference, ascertaining that the tyrant should have had all the son's disagreeable appearances, and reciprocally the enamoured prince all the amiable ones of his father, to be admitted within the precincts of beautified nature, in ideal truth, which is poetical versimilitude in all the arts of polite composition.—The residence of the wicked passions should present a forbidding outside, that of the amiable a pleasing one; the latter have a soothing, the former a rough voice.

This unvarying doctrine must be assiduously attended to by all performers, male and female, desirous of excelling: viz. Their thoughts must never be bent on imitating the gestures or voice of individuals; that is but aping, or limited taking off at best; they must never make to themselves set rules for playing any part, but according to their respective feelings, at the several representations; never be slaves to certain returns of peculiar attitudes, that I have seen sometimes made even to fore-run the words; upon which too great a marking or dwelling is to be avoided, as well as an affected look of importance, to tell the audience that something great is coming, which they ought seriously to attend: that is only to be effectuated by the progressive pathos of the scene.

Let performers of genteel comedy cautiously remember, that a studied *languoroso* in pronunciation does not imply *ease*; nor a toilette-affectation in movement, *grace*.

Let

Let neither they nor tragedians be over fond of practiſing too frequently before a glaſs, a taſteful friend is a much better monitor.

The arts they both muſt apply to ſo far as *acceſſary to theatrical repreſentation*, are muſick, geſticulation, ſculpture, hiſtory, painting.

From *muſick*, known to a certain degree, they will learn to command and modulate their voice for the proper accenting of words, and variouſly colouring of ſentences, to give a proper key to the next ſpeaker, who muſt be equally ſkilled at taking it up. They will hence be taught to avoid running phraſe into phraſe indiſcriminately; and never to ſtrain their ſpeech to the higheſt pitch, and diſcover, as it were, the bare and jagged ends of the voice; no, they will be enabled thereby to attain a practical *melopœa*, or art of melodiouſly cloathing their pronunciation, ſo that all utterance, from the loweſt to the higheſt note, ſhall move in an eaſily diverſified, pleaſing, yet appoſitely expreſſive tenor, and prove an affirmative or voucher of Monſieur Marmontelle's aſſertion, which I jump in with as chearfully here, as I zealouſly, for *Horace's* ſake, have oppoſed a miſrepreſentation of him in the ſecond book.

Le recit noté n'a jamais ni la delicateſſe, ni la chaleur, ni la grace de la ſimple declamation, parceque les inflexions de la parole ſont inappreciables, que dans aucune langue, on ne les peut ecrire, et que le chanteur le plus habile, ne peut jamais les faire paſſer dans ſa modulation.

"A recital bound ſtrictly by muſical notes, never diſplays either the "warmth or gracefulneſs, which plain and unfetterred ſpeaking can; "becauſe all the inflexions of the voice cannot be appreciated; they "cannot be written or ſpecified in any language, and the ableſt ſingers "can neither expreſs with, nor introduce them into their warbling "faculty."

Of

Of this truth, equal to any *Rome's Roſcius* could, *England's* hath given an illuſtrious inſtance in reading his ode to *Shakſpear*, &c. whereby fine muſical compoſition, maſterly inſtrumental, as well as vocal performance were diſtanced.

From *Sculpture* performers are to learn pleaſing attitudes, and how to ſtand ſtill with firmneſs and grace: from *Hiſtory-Painting* the diverſified energy of the paſſions in the human countenance, with the body's ſuitable action to each.

Geſticulation is the next art they are to labour for perfection in, which is to derive its neceſſary aſſiſtance from the art of dancing; whence theatric ſtudents will be informed, that all graceful movement of the arms muſt begin above, from the ſhoulder, and never from the elbow, which, when firſt put in play, always preſents an angular deformity.

As the voice is never to be exerted to the utmoſt, no more are the arms to be projected, becauſe the pulling them in would be unſeemly. The hands are never to be raiſed above the head, unleſs upon ſome very extraordinary occaſion, nor veil the face, unleſs when unlucky in expreſſing grief.

The arms ſhould, if I may be allowed the term, enjoy a modulation of movement, which would baniſh from our ſight all crude beginnings and abrupt endings of different geſtures. They ſhould never aukwardly croſs, but gently ſlide from one towards the other with a waving line, ſometimes preceding, ſometimes following, but moſt frequently accompanying the words with a friendly accordance, mutually indulging each other with opportunities of interjective graces and energetic heightenings in the beautiful, and the elegant of comic; in the pathetic, and the ſublime of tragic acting: which indeed none but thoſe who

who are poſſeſt of a dramatic genius, can ever attain, with the concurrence of time and application; but never acquire from precepts alone; becauſe they depend ſo much upon the degree of each particular perſon's *feeling*.

Without ſuch an innate qualification, there is no poſſibility of ſucceeding on the ſtage; notwithſtanding the miſtaken arguments ſome hardy diſſentients have offered to the contrary. They confounded *feeling* to a proper degree, with the exceſs of it, which in tragedy makes a miſrepreſentative hero become an offenſive ſnivveller, an object deſpicable even to the ſofter ſex; for according to the right reaſon of things, and the ſatyriſt Juvenal,

Poenam ſibilis gemitus, flagrantia aquis
Non debet dolor eſſe viri ——

Inſtead,

Would not unbridled ſway t'oppreſſive grief ——
Thy lot's affliction?—bear it like a man.

But that a performer ſhould feel to a certain degree, is alſo as certain, by the ſame right reaſon of things as vouched for by the two greateſt critics of antiquity, as well as by all duly qualified among the moderns.

Fingit enim natura prius nos intus ad omnem
Fortunarum habitum ——

We're firſt by nature moulded how to feel,
And thence t' expreſs the paſſions that ariſe.

—ſi:

Primum ipſi tibi ——— Hor.

Imitated.

If you wou'd have my eyes with tears to flow;
Lead you the way; my grief is more than ſhew.

Vidi ego ſæpe hiſtriones, cum ex aliqua graviori actu perſonam depoſuiſſent, flentes adhuc egredi. QUINTIL.

" I have often ſeen performers when they came off the ſtage, from " acting a pathetic part, with tears ſtill flowing from their eyes."

The ſame argument is good in regard to the *vis comica*; for if an actor were to be ſo far run away with by his feeling, as to be thrown into an immoderate fit of laughter, it would mar the juſt execution of his part.

Dramatic *feeling* is as neceſſary to the firſt-rate performers in tragedy or comedy, as dramatic *genius* is for the writers of both; and for thoſe who have no ſhare in either department, all inſtructions are in vain; they muſt never hope to riſe above mediocrity, or to be enliſted in the rolls of fame; a dull proſpect!

———

The rules given in different places, not to ſatiate by being together, throughout this work, relative to dramatic genius in writing, and acting, are but general; yet whoever attends to them will ſoon become acquainted with all the particular ones, and *minutiæ* of the art through time, reflexion, and converſation with perſons of knowledge and taſte: but

but of which, were I to profecute a tedious and diſguſting detail, I ſhould certainly incur the reproach of

Ne quid nimis;

by Voltaire happily improved into one line

Le ſecret d'ennuyer eſt celui de tout dire

and which I humbly attempt to paraphraſe in two

Tireſome thoſe authors who on ev'ry head
Dr.. awl out prolixly—a.. ll that can be ſaid.

There yet remains an art to be treated of, though perhaps for the firſt time, on which *theatrical repreſentation* in its ultimate perfection muſt greatly depend, and that is the art of *managing* or *directing* theatrical companies—which being no leſs a charge than that of preſiding over a concurrence of the polite arts, ought never fall to the ſhare of ignorant perſons.

As no armies can hope to win battles without a good general, ſo no acting company can hope for ſucceſs without a duly qualified ſuperintendent, which requires taſte, cultivated by a knowledge of books, and the world. To have ſeen the politer nations of Europe would not be amiſs, as many obſervations made there might be ſometimes uſefully brought into practice at home.

From the frequent occaſion of converſing with foreign gentlemen, and dealing too with foreign artiſts, a knowledge of the French and Italian languages would be more than convenient; even neceſſary, to prevent impoſitions on either ſide, through mercenary agents.

He ought to be thoroughly acquainted with the doctrine of dramatic poems, in order to be able to ſpeak to the purpoſe with ſuch gentlemen as offer him pieces for repreſentation, and to ſupport his opinion either in favour of, or againſt them.

He ſhould be intimately acquainted with the art of acting, not only in the groſs, but in all its fineſſes, and poſſeſs an intuitive knowledge of the ſeveral faculties of each individual in his company, that upon any performer's deceaſe, defaulting, or any accident whatſoever, he need not loſe a moment's time in thinking where to beſtow the part vacated.

He ſhould alſo have previouſly told young performers in what caſt of parts he would have them to be privately ſtudied and ready, in caſe of any opportunity preſenting itſelf, which would prevent, in a great meaſure, the neceſſity of parts being read, or of changing plays.

He ſhould never appear chargeable with a partiality to undeſerving authors or actors, which cruelly condemns the more meritorious to pine in obſcurity, while it obtrudes favourite or ſycophant dances to the publick's reſentment and deriſion.

He ſhould have ſtudied in ancient and modern writers, ſuch as FERRARIO *de Re veſtiaria*, with others, how to dreſs plays, taken from the Greek and Roman hiſtories, &c. as well as from the hiſtories of remoter nations of the world, before or ſince their time, viz. the Perſians, Indians, Chineſe, Mexicans, &c.

From POTTER's *Greek*, and KENNET's *Roman* antiquities, he can get ſufficient inſtruction relative to their religious ceremonies, triumphal entries, proceſſions, &c.

So

So much for the *spectacle*, now let me add a few words concerning the moral conduct of the stage. Let not an expression be hazarded there, that might not without any apprehension of rebuke be uttered in the politest company.—The political licenser does, or ought to, take care in all new pieces; let a judicious inspector be employed for the old ones, to substitute chaste, in the place of obscene wit.

Likewise let the performers of both sexes learn, by their manager's example and advice, to behave towards each other with decency and good-breeding, that a green room in consequence might become an assembly of decorum and elegance; and why not: when one considers those beautiful maxims, and sublime sentiments which they are professionally obliged to study, speak, or at least to hear, in their comic and tragic performances?

From a respectful deportment towards each other, will naturally follow, that of all other people unconnected with their art, which by this means would be rescued from all the odious censure, execrating anathemas, and fulminating abominations promulgated against it by mistaken zealots in the barbarous times of religious ignorance.

The stage would become, in time, a desirable resource for persons of reputable, or even honourable families, but reduced, if endowed with talents to shine thereon; as it gives also to those born in the very lowest rank an opportunity of cultivating such qualifications as nature has given them; that thence becoming eminent, they are often honoured with the notice, acquaintance, and friendship of their superiors.

A final answer to all the voluminous tracts, whether the theatre be not rather a school of vice than virtue, is, that like all the other fine arts, of painting, musick, &c. if a good use be made of them, they may be productive of great good; and if a bad one, of great evil.—

The more reputable will every profeſſion be, the more reſpectable the footing is, on which the legiſlature permits it to ſtand.

While actors and actreſſes were refuſed the rites of orthodox burial, and aſſigned over to hell in the lump, they were induced to think that any application to moral improvements or practice would be but ſo much time loſt, therefore they gave a looſe to proſcribed nature in them to follow what inclination ſhe pleaſed; ſince to do otherwiſe, they were told, would be to no purpoſe.

The cream of the jeſt was, that while dramatic performers labour-ed under this hard ſentence, dramatic writers enjoyed every priviledge of the church. This was damning the *effect* and ſaving the *cauſe*. It might perhaps be chriſtian, but it does not appear very philoſophi-cal, or even to agree with the dictates of ſenſe and truth. Perhaps the authors owed this eccleſiaſtical indulgence to a fear of their pens ex-poſing monkiſh farces, and other pious mummeries.

The end of dramatic writing, dramatic performing, and dramatic managing is to be honoured with crowded audiences, which jointly with the moral ſcenes beheld, exhibit the moſt beautiful picture that can be ſeen in a civilized nation, declaring it the reſidence of humani-ty. And what in this low ſphere of being can excite in us higher ideas of the *ſupreme*, than ſuch improved faculties of inſtructively p'eaſing and being pleaſed, which at the ſame time fulfil HORACE's

Omne tulit punctum qui miſcuit utile dulci!

This I confeſs to be my ſincere ſentiment, in firm oppoſition to the Geneva-caricaturiſt of philoſophy; that would-be degrader of man-kind: with all ſuch!—But ſhould He and they think me in the wrong, I am pleaſed with being ſo; nor ſhall ever envy him or his abettors

the

the unnatural ſatisfaction to be received from an unſocial indulgence of your miſanthropy,

Preferring ſavage cuſtom to bright parts,
And rude exiſtence to politer arts;
Be ROUSSEAU ſtill, your own ſtrange choice admire:
—Thus let me live in error, thus expire.—

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 20. Line 3. read, illuc; P. 22. l. 11. r. æneo. P. 24. l. 8. r. ab urbe. P. 27. l. 10. after his, r. ill-ſtarr'd. P. 28. l. 14. r. obvertuntur; P. 36. l. 9. r. exclamant. P. 58. l. 2. after &c. r. or. P. 59. l. 4. for ſubject, r. object. P. 60. l. 17. for ui, r. ut. P. 64. laſt line, for ſubject, r. drama. P. 75. l. 15. r. phyſiognomy. P. 80. l. 26. r. quegli. P. 81. l. 8. for, to thence, r. thence to. P. 100. l. 26. r. had. P. 102. l. 20. r. O juvenes. P. 111. l. 16. r. tabulas. P. 112. l. 23. after hurt, r. be?

A TABLE of the chief Contents in the Miſcellanies mentioned page 97, to be had of the Author only.

PROSE.

Taſte reduced to obvious and ſimple principles.

Ethics, or moral precepts for the youth of both ſexes conducting themſelves through *ſocial life*, with honour, dignity, and reſpect, deduced from SHAKESPEARE's text, as well as rules for the *repreſentative*.

The falſe beautiful and falſe ſublime of acting diſplayed by inſtruction and ſpecimen.

Three humourous Eſſays.

1° On *immoderate drinking*.
2° On the national virtues of *Cock-fighting*.
3° A genealogical account of *Humbugging*.

Confucius' life, doctrine, and politics epitomized: to which are added, the moſt remarkable effects cauſed in conſequence throughout the *Chineſe* empire.

VERSE.

The Deity.
The Laſt-Day.

Logico-maſtix, expoſing the idleneſs of School-philoſophy.
Tranſlations.
On the *Engliſh*, *French*, and *Italian* languages.
An addreſs to Wit.
Another, to Fortune.
Venus' Progreſs.
A vindication of the Fair Sex.
The Beautiful Frown.
A Cynic's declaration of Love.
A young Poet's Wiſh.
To *Cælia's Lark* that had flown away, an Elegy; in imitation of CATULLUS for the loſs of *Leſbia's* ſparrow.
On modern Birth-Day Ode-writing, with a ſketch of one as good as any other.
AMORETTA, a Paſtoral.
INKLE and YARICO, a ſhort epic Poem.
The *Author* on himſelf, in imitation of HORACE.
THE POET by Excellence, a didactic Poem.